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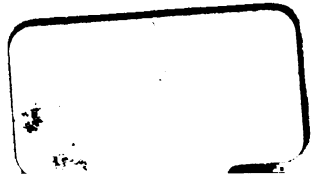

MANUELLA.

A. Hervieu, del.ᵉ

R. W. Smart, fec.

THE BOLERO.

Elizabeth Alexander

MANUELLA,

THE EXECUTIONER'S DAUGHTER.

A STORY OF MADRID.

"At Madrid, and in every part of Spain, it would be safer to rob and murder on the highway than to take from an image of the Virgin Mary a pin, a bracelet, or a top-knot."—LANGLE'S SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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MANUELLA,

THE EXECUTIONER'S DAUGHTER.

A STORY OF MADRID.

CHAPTER I.

" Quiero conceder que hubo doce Pares de Francia, pero no quiero creer, que hicieron todas aquellas cosas que el Arzobispo Turpin dellos escribe: porque la verdad dello es, que fuéron caballeros escogidos por los Reyes de Francia, á quien llamáron Pares, por ser todos iguales en valor, en calidad y en valentia: aloménos si no lo eran, era razon que lo fuesen, y era como una religion de las que ahora se usan de Santiago, ó de Calatrava, que se presupone, que los que la profesan han de ser, ó deben ser caballeros valerosos, valientes y bien nacidos:" &c.

DON QUIXOTE DE LA MANCHA, t. ii. cap. xlix.

Disappointed Hopes—Spanish Chivalry—The Installation of a Knight of the Order of St. James—An Intruder.

THE last hope had vanished from Juanita's breast. Her face, turned towards Merced, betrayed no emotion. Within her heart despair began to generate its poison. Her grief was

now silent; no longer relieved by tears, it had become condensed, stunning. But her sister was not to be deceived by an outward appearance of calm: she could not return the cold smile of Juanita, for it was an unnatural one. As she saw her recline to rest, Merced intently gazed upon her companion. Composure was spread upon the unhappy girl's features; but all was so icy, so still, the drapery of her couch seemed to shade a corpse. Merced imprinted a kiss upon those motionless lips, and then silently stole away to her own chamber.

Seventeen revolving years had ripened the heart of Juanita into warmth and tenderness. Isidro, the playmate of her childhood, the companion of her youth, the betrothed of her heart, had become a kindred part of her being. The withering blast of a day had nipped the cherished blossoms of affection and constancy.

Merced retired with a foreboding mind. She thought on her sister's sorrow—she reasoned on

the impulses of the heart—formed plans for the tranquillity of her own—and, soothing her fears to rest by contemplating the even and prudent course *she* would pursue in future life, pressed her cheek upon her pillow, and gently sank to repose. Her dreams were of Herbert de Clifford.

When Merced awoke, it was day; and she arose blaming herself that she had not paid her sister a visit during the night. The affectionate girl ran to her chamber, and, bending over the couch to bestow her morning salute of tenderness, drew back immediately with alarm—Juanita was not there!

"Sister!" she exclaimed, turning round and expecting to find her somewhere in the apartment; but her voice failed as she beheld the casement thrown wide open. She hurried forward, but fear deprived her of strength; and sinking down, she literally crawled to the balcony. As she drew near it, a fearful thought oppressed her. The composure of her sister the preceding

night—her tranquil resignation! Merced stopped. As her looks were wildly thrown around, they fell upon something fastened to the bars of the balcony. Advancing, and looking over, she found that it was a shawl hanging partly down the wall. All was still, for few persons were yet moving without. Juanita had fled from her father's dwelling.

Not waiting to reason upon this cruel and unconfiding proceeding of a beloved sister, she hastened to communicate the event and raise an alarm.

Bright and cheerful rose that morn that witnessed the distress of the afflicted family of His Excellency Don Ruy Nepomuceno de Valmarino. The feelings of each individual on the subject of Juanita's departure were various. Doña Mariquita was silent; there was an implication of reproach in the genuine grief of her husband, that checked her volubility; but her predominant feeling was indignation at the blow

struck at her authority, in the abandonment of the nuptials of her daughter with the Fiscal,—joined to a silent resolve to punish the refractory girl with added tyranny, should she be brought back to the circle of her home.—Don Jayme, who penetrated these thoughts, (for a mutual disposition to pride and cunning united the mother and son more closely than family ties,) at once struck out his plan of proceeding; and, devoting an hour less than usual to the adornment of his handsome person, buckled on his sword, and left the house muttering projects of revenge.

Other feelings agitated the breast of the father. His weak submission to an imperious woman now brought to his mind conviction and regret. His own child was the victim of his puerile compliance, which had driven her for safety to the stranger. Firm were the resolves of the worthy hidalgo, as his glance fell upon the

distressed Merced, that from this day his fostering solicitude should be exercised for the moral happiness as well as the worldly establishment of his children. Those moments which decide the fate of our lives—separation and death—when the means of atoning a wrong are for ever withdrawn from us—bear with them an anguish that casts a blight on our after peace of mind. From the grave of the departed—that silent tribunal of our deeds—arises an accusing spirit to haunt us the rest of our days. A furrow in the cheek of some is a channel to tears of remorse whose source can never dry. Fearfully are the dead avenged upon their surviving persecutors.

Having despatched messengers in quest of his daughter, Don Ruy was proceeding to lend their exertions his own assistance, when a communication from the Chapter of Santiago reminded him, as an elder brother of the order,

to attend at the inauguration of a new member; and he commenced, though reluctantly, to equip himself in the robes of the knighthood.

Spain, *par excellence* the parent of knight-errantry and fiction, of chivalry and romance, seems to cling to the first as the eldest of her offspring. The amphitheatres, where now are celebrated the feats of a matador, portray the spirit of the arenas of old. The *caballeros in plaza* recal the champions of the tournament; for even in these days the grandees of Castile, at the *fiestos reales*, have appeared, in the ancient dress of their valiant ancestors, to encounter the dangers of the lists. Peculiarly alive to the marvellous and romantic, they hug the chains whereby they are bound to these visionary creations, and care not to dwell on natural but commonplace reality. Yet in spite of this general delusion, the march of intellect has not failed to reach the shores of Iberia. Already has the intellectual barrier begun to fall.

Thousands of daring spirits regard with jealous and scrutinizing eyes the pageantry of rank and monkish rule, the mummery of a mere ceremonial-church, which, with professed humility, glories in worldly pomp, and secretly grasps at power, at wealth and dominion.

The most innocent, and by consequence, in all probability, the most durable of monkish institutions in Spain, is the religious order of St. James of the Sword. Not ours is the task to investigate its claims to antiquity, or to dispute the chronicles preserved in the various temples of the institution at Cordova, Seville, Barcelona, and Salamanca. Nor will we question the heraldic authority produced for the escutcheon of their inauguration, said to have been conferred in the ninth century by Ramire I., King of Galicia, on the occasion of a victory over the Moors, for which he was indebted to the presence of the holy apostle himself, who was seen (with a white flag embroidered with

a red cross) to lead on the conquering host. In contradiction to every respectable tradition which fixes the origin of armorial bearings in the eleventh century, we hereby proclaim that the archives of the monasteries and lay-institutions of that order throughout the Peninsula affix the date of their coat of arms anno Domini 846; and in that year the meritorious fraternity adopted the *device*—"Rubet ensis sanguine Arabum."

The progress of time has, however, wrought many changes in the laws and discipline of the order. At first they ordained celibacy, poverty, obedience, and chastity; subsequently, these regulations were modified. Some chapters were ordained secular, and the lay-brothers were suffered to enter the bonds of matrimony. The fair sex emulated the lords of creation, and very soon the tenets of St. James of the Sword claimed numerous disciples amongst the beauty and rank of Spain, who had entered the nunneries of the order. But even among these, in parti-

cular cases, the privilege of withdrawing from it was requisite, to share in the mundane duties of wedlock. Those convents of the institution, however, established after the Council of Trent, were subjected to the most rigorous discipline; that of the Commendadoras de Santiago, founded at Madrid, in the seventeeth century, was crippled by the severity of the monastic spirit of that day; and though many remonstrances were made, the vicar of Christ refused the professors even the privilege (which other commanderies of their sex previously inaugurated enjoyed) of stepping beyond the barred precincts portioned off for those celestial brides in the temple of their worship, and of enjoying the accustomed freedom of the church.

Of the Spanish orders of knighthood, few have withstood the ravages of time; their very fame has sunk into oblivion. The Oak of Navarre has fallen; the Lily of Aragon has withered; the beads of the Holy Rosary of

Toledo are scattered in the wilderness of neglect; the Sacred Scarf is rent into tatters; the Dove has flown; whilst even the Blade of Santiago bids fair to rust away; for, in these degenerate days, few are the chivalrous votaries who will dare to pluck it from its scabbard, and swear to defend and uphold the unbending laws of that institution.—There was an exclusiveness about this patrician order, which, under a despotic dynasty in its favour, begot no small degree of patronage. The highborn and gallant were flattered by initiation—inasmuch as the arbitrary distinction was never requested, but conferred unasked; and any impatient noble who *avowed* a desire to belong to it, rendered himself for ever inadmissible. Thus, recruiting their ranks by their own choice of members, a factitious lustre was reflected upon the object of their election, as their severe regulations exacted unblemished fame and spotless ancestry.

Isidro, Conde de Nuñez, had become an object of the chapter's choice, and the noble youth was that day to receive the cross of Santiago. At the appointed hour, a succession of carriages stopped at the farther end of the Calle de Fuencarral, before the Convent of Las Señoras Commendadoras de Santiago; and the church was already besieged by the friends of the young Count, as well as by the curious generally—for the ceremony was of rare occurrence.

There was something imposing in the effect of the interior of the temple, which imparted an interest altogether independent of the ceremony itself. Tiers of grated windows, ranged above each other, were crowded by nuns, who were so far permitted to "assist" at the inauguration. Pale, but expressive faces—youth, beauty, and innocence—were there, and, perhaps, some worldly regrets. Those brides of a heavenly Master to whom the gates of Paradise were

held to be half-opened by their vow of continence, appeared, as they looked down upon erring manhood, like mediating spirits.

In the centre, the ground was carpeted; benches were placed on either side, and, facing the high altar, a seat for the elder of the commandery. Equipped in the white robes of the order, with a red cross embroidered on the left shoulder, the knights appeared, making a genuflexion as they passed before the tabernacle, and took their seats in succession of seniorship. Dressed in the manly uniform of the horse grenadiers, Isidro advanced, and knelt before the elder. The venerable Don Ruy Nepomuceno then rose; and, holding the book of laws in his left hand, and a drawn sword in his right, proceeded to read. The old man was scarcely audible—as the tones of his voice breathed a solemnity, caused by his private affliction, and rendered still more poignant by the presence of the youth at his feet.

As Isidro answered the venerable catechist, there was an imposing silence around; but the virgins of the temple, kneeling at their balconies, might be heard to whisper, at the conclusion of each address to the Supreme Being, the responsive "Amen."

"Voto (I swear)," repeated Isidro, "to defend and uphold, in public and in private, the immaculate conception of our lady the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus."

"You swear," resumed the worthy parent of Juanita, "that no taint, no blame rests upon you, that can attach to your conduct with the weaker sex?—that never, by word or deed, you have offended female chastity?"

"I swear!" rejoined the youth.

"Blasphemer!" interrupted a voice, and a man sprang forward into the centre of the congregation.

The brethren of the order rushed to intercept the intruder's path.

"Where—where is my sister?" exclaimed Don Jayme, as he endeavoured to make his way towards the new candidate for the cross of Santiago.

A scream burst from one of the grated windows of the cloister; all eyes turned to it, and the hand of Isidro pointed to the pale and dejected Juanita leaning against the iron bars.

The trembling fingers of the elder of the chapter dropped the emblematic sword of Santiago, and his uplifted hands indicated his thanks to Heaven for the safety of his child.

The ceremony of the inauguration was stopped; the sacrilegious interruption of holy rites required the purification of the temple, and the knights instantly dispersed.

CHAPTER II.

" Nor mark of vulgar toil that hand betrayed;
So femininely white, it might bespeak
Another sex, when match'd with that smooth cheek."

LARA.

Disasters attendant upon Nocturnal Adventures—
The Mysterious Page.

WHEN Herbert awoke from the trance into which he had fallen in consequence of the ill usage he had received at the cemetery, he found himself on his own couch, at the house of Montreil. His head was bandaged, and he was much weakened by loss of blood. As the valet

entered the room, he learnt from him that the physician's orders were, he should remain as quiet as possible.

"Por la Virgen del Remedio, Don Herbert, they have battered you in good earnest."

"Who conveyed me hither?"

"No one knows."

"Is the Chevalier at home?"

"Señor, no! He and the Colonel are taking a ride."

"Bring me wine, Pasquale; I am faint."

"By the flames of St. Antonio, you must not take any; the doctor will not allow it."

"Bring me water, then!"

"By the body of holy Alifonso that reposes at Zamora, worse still!"

"If you persist in your refusal, I must help myself;"—saying which, the wounded man made an effort to rise, but sank back exhausted.

"A message for Don Herbert," said a servant entering the room.

" From whom ?"

" He who bears it will not say : he must deliver it to the Caballero in person."

" Bid him enter."

A youth, whose slender form, and almost childish features, proclaimed him not more than twelve or fourteen years of age, now entered the room, wrapped in the universal dark capa. As he hesitated on the threshold, Herbert motioned to Pasquale to leave the room. The boy then, though slowly and timidly, approached him.

Herbert could but faintly distinguish his features. Loss of blood had indeed weakened his sight and other faculties ; and the light of day, which streamed dimly through the curtains, added a deeper shade to the countenance of the youth.

" Speak, child !"

" My mistress. . . ."

De Clifford turned his eyes upon the speaker ; but his boyish looks accounted for that soft-

ness of voice which else might have bespoken a female.

"My mistress, sir, the Lady Olivares, bade me bear to you expressions of her regret at your mischance."

"Come nearer, boy; tell me, how fares your lovely mistress?—sit by me; let me speak with thee."

"My lady, sir, is well!" said the youth, yet hesitating to approach.

"Your lady does me much honour, gentle child. Prithee, sit down."

"My duty, sir, respect. . . ."

"Pshaw! respect?—can one like thee disgrace De Clifford? No! thy mien and bearing vouch for it. Come, sit beside me; sufficiently art thou ennobled by being the page of the Marquesa de Olivares."

The boy slowly took possession of a chair.

"If you have aught to say to her," resumed

the page, "I will bear your message with my best ability."

"Give her my thanks; tell her—but first give me some drink, kind youth: I am parched —burnt; water, I pray thee!"

"I know, Caballero, the orders of your physicians; but without infringing them, I may assuage your pain. I came prepared."

The page took from his bosom a small phial, the contents of which he poured into a glass, and presented to Herbert. The effect was instantaneous: a freshness and cooling moisture pervaded his parched tongue and throat, while the violent beating of his temples by degrees subsided. The finger of the youth gently pressed his pulse.

"Señor, you revive; remain quiet, and you will sleep. I go to announce to my lady the prompt and beneficial effects of the cordial with which I was entrusted. Farewell!"

"Nay, do not leave me!" and De Clifford

took the hand which rested on his arm, but was gently withdrawn from his weak grasp. "Thou shalt not leave me—I owe thee life!" He tried to raise himself; the effort was too much; again he sank upon his pillow.

The youth bent over him, with earnest solicitude bathing his temples.

"'Tis like a dream!" said Herbert, recovering. "Would it had been so. Horrible!—so beautiful—so young. O, stop the savage!" cried he, raving; "she will be torn—trampled—gored. The vault!—oh! would you not save her? To the vault!—to the vault!"

The hand that was pressing his temples trembled.

"Kind boy! I would thou wert my brother. What art thou?—tell me!—let me hear thy voice—there is music in it. When wilt thou return?—come, if thou wilt, with thy lady's messages—but *come!*"

"Alas! Señor, too humble is my lot to rank with your society."

"Hast thou a father—a parent, who bestows affection upon thee?"

"Señor, yes."

"What if he were the lowest menial, fair boy — nay, even were he the city's executioner, still thy condition were richer far than mine. I have no father, nor——Why tremblest thou?—The more I look on thee, the more thou gainest on my heart."

The youth bent his eyes to the ground, while Herbert sank into a reverie.

"What message, Señor, shall I bear my lady?"

"Ha! tell me thy name?"

"Señor!"

"Thy name — how I may henceforth call thee?"

"'Tis——"

"Well?"

A sudden impulse seemed to have crossed the mind of the youth, but to have been instantly repressed.

"The page of Doña Vicentita!"

The slow tinkling of a bell in the street struck upon their ears; the visitor sank upon his knees, and repeated a prayer for the sick, as the holy "Viaticum" was borne along past the windows of the apartment to the dwelling of some dying believer, in order to prepare his soul for another and a better world. A long train of acolytes, with wax flambeaux, friars chaunting requiems, or reciting a *De profundis*, the sudden prostration of all—the groups of women and children kneeling at the balconies to his Divine Majesty, (for such is the title bestowed upon the hostie contained in the chalice held up before him by the priest)—all contribute to the solemnity of the last solace which religion imparts to man, and render this ceremony per-

haps the most imposing of all those in which the pageantry of the Romish church appeals to the imagination.

The youth, as he made the final sign of the cross upon his forehead, when the imposing train had passed away, marked the heedless attitude of Herbert; and a feeling of pain struck on his heart, as he contemplated the listless heretic.

"Happy ignorance!" said Herbert, musing, "to believe that man has power to sanctify the unclean spirit, and send it sinless to its Maker. The faith of catholic Rome were mine, could I put trust in her indulgences; but the awakening from these delusive promises might drive the disappointed soul to unbelief—to atheism."

The closing of his room door startled him: he looked around; the page of the Marquesa de Olivares had disappeared.

CHAPTER III.

"O never talk again to me
Of northern climes or British ladies;
It has not been your lot to see,
Like me, the lovely girl of Cadiz.
Although her eye be not of blue,
Nor fair her locks, like English lasses',
How far its own expressive hue
The languid azure eye surpasses!"

Disappointment—The Page's Song—Morning Visits—Personalities—An open Rupture.

THE gay, frolicsome, thoughtless pastime of a masked ball may often inflict a lasting pang on the disappointed, sad, and lacerated hearts of its votaries. At the last Santa Catalina ball, where a thousand eyes had snatched delight

from the brilliant presence of the gitana mask, few would have suspected that lively and fascinating charmer had exchanged, for the interest she imparted, the possession of her own happiness. As she vanished from the hall, a page in waiting threw a mantle round her; the carriage drew up, and, disheartened and silent, she sank into the corner of it, weary of herself—of the world—of life. She was rapidly conveyed to her own residence, gained her private apartments, tore away the mask, and, glancing in the cheval mirror, beheld herself reflected, sparkling with adornments, beautiful as ever;—but how changed was the *expression* of that enchanting face!

"Had he known me!—But no—he loves another. 'Tis well—'tis well; he shall never learn my disappointment. Vicentita de Olivares spurned for another! . . ."

The elegant Marquesa glanced again in the glass.

"No—it is the mask which is in fault. I have no rival!"

Thus came to her aid that universal panacea—vanity, if indeed it were vanity in Vicentita. Tranquillized by its influence, her cheek pressed her pillow; and whilst closing her beautiful eyes, she lulled herself to peace and rest, with the confident hope, that when again their radiance should fall on Herbert de Clifford, all his recollections of others would vanish.

The morrow came, and went; but no Herbert de Clifford! The servants appeared and withdrew; there was not even a message; and she felt annoyed by their intrusion. At length she asked if there had been any calls.

"None, my lady."

"Not even. . . ."

"Not even the Caballero Don Herbert," interrupted the domestic.

"I meant . . . my husband!" said the Mar-

quesa, vexed that her anxiety should be so readily interpreted.

Another day and another night passed away; and the morning again brightened upon the saddened features of the beautiful Vicentita. But there was, meanwhile, a new inmate in her house. A young page was seated at the feet of the Marquesa. The cautious, yet anxious Alice had partly divulged a story, at the recital of which the feeling heart of Vicentita had been touched. The youthful page was received under the protection of the House of Olivares.

The object of the Marquesa's anxiety had changed. She had ascertained from Alice Downie some particulars of Herbert de Clifford's mischance; but the balsam thus administered to her wounded pride brought with it a pain almost as poignant. De Clifford was seriously hurt—was dangerously ill; while custom, rank, and sex forbade her to bestow that care and assistance

which the female heart is ever prompt to lavish on the object of its devotion. A tear stood trembling in her eye.

He was a pretty boy, that delicate page, who sought to divert her grief. On his knee lay Vicentita's guitar, and raising his eyes with sympathetic sadness, his fingers mechanically played a patriotic air, and, with a beseeching look, he sought to divert her sorrow as he sang:

"The heroes of Spain breathe no more!
Dark was the day and the deed;
Fearful the cannon-roar
That made our brave ones bleed.

"But it drowned not a nation's sigh;
It toll'd the usurper's doom:
For a thousand thousand lie
In the silent atoning tomb."

The Marquesa was roused from the lethargy of her grief. Often had those stanzas fallen upon her listless ear, but now they sank into her heart. A soul was breathed into the melody;

an angelic spirit was infused into that voice. She gazed earnestly at the page, who, grateful for her attention to his song, changed the air and measure, and then resumed his strain.

" Away, Amor, 'tis day;
It is the dawn—away!
The neighbours are about,
And citizens are out;
Yes, yes, 'tis envious light,
And we must part, till night.
Another . . . now be gone!
For jealous eyes are nigh;
And should they ever spy . . .
My life, we are undone.
Away, Amor, 'tis day;
It is the dawn—away!

" The beam that drinks the pearl
Of dew, yet leaves the flower,—
From one devoted girl,
Steals all that graced her bower.
Heaven's golden light to some
May life and joy impart;
But to my widowed heart,
The shades of absence come.
Away, Amor, 'tis day;
It is the dawn—away!"

There was a pathos in the whole performance, that found a ready way to the Marquesa's heart. Her looks were tenderly bent on the page, but her emotions allowed not of utterance; she waved her hand to encourage him to proceed, when the door was thrown open, and De Clifford followed the servant who announced him.

A sad change was in his looks; his features were deadly pale, his form spectral, and his steps still unsteady. The Marquesa rose, advanced to meet him, and, leading him to the couch she had just quitted, seated herself by his side.

The exertion he had made to pay his visit to the Marquesa had been too much for Herbert's strength, and the lady painfully read in his appearance the cause of his silence. For a few instants she was fearful to trust to her own voice, lest it should betray the interest she took in his condition.

The page had turned away, and earnestly looked at his mistress for permission to retire; but in that inquiring glance he met the eye of Herbert, and his own, unconsciously, fell beneath it, whilst the latter gazed with earnestness on the youth's features, and marked the colour that rushed into his face.

"You may leave, child," said the Marquesa.

"Kind-hearted boy!" said Herbert, "take my thanks with thee."

"He waited upon you, Herbert," said Vicentita.

"He is worthy of so fair a mistress."

"I pray you," said the Marquesa, as the page withdrew, "let me hear the cause of the mischance that befel you."

"A folly, Marquesa!"

"An act of gallantry, says my brother, for which you were atrociously repaid."

"Fair play, I entreat you! the most inter-

ested should be first satisfied. Tell me—speak of yourself—how have you fared since last we met?"

"You are an extortioner, Caballero! but I suppose you Englishmen claim a privilege—at least, by your bluntness, you *take* it. I am better to-day," added Vicentita.

"And Don Ruy?—your mother?—Juanita?—and Merced?" naming her the last who was first in his thoughts.

"She will answer for herself," said the Marquesa, as the door opened, and her sister appeared.

Lovely indeed was the appearance of Merced. Throwing back the lace mantilla on her shoulder, she advanced towards Doña Vicentita with an elastic step, inspired with new spirits on beholding her sister; but the pleasure she felt at Herbert's appearance was not perceptible to him; for, having returned his salutation, her smile was

instantly checked, and her demeanour became cold and formal.

"You were to visit Juanita with me at the convent," said Merced to the Marquesa.

"How fares the gentle Juanita?" asked Herbert, interrupting the colloquy of the sisters.

"Indifferently, I fear!" said Vicentita. "She has left her father's home—for ever!" she added, with a sigh.

"Ha!—explain yourself."

"Indeed, Caballero, it is but too true! She has entered the novitiate of Santiago, and soon will take the veil!"

A silent sadness pervaded the party, which was interrupted by the entrance of Don Rodrigo. A momentary frown gathered on the Jesuit's brow, as he espied De Clifford; but by an effort it was subdued; and his manner towards the youth almost amounted to complaisance. The reserve of Herbert, however, remained un-

shaken; and he took advantage of a little by-talk between the priest and Vicentita to converse with Merced. He was, nevertheless, far from loquacious; the very attempt to please defeated, as he imagined, its own purpose; whilst Merced, ever more reserved with him than with others, received his attentions with an icy indifference which effectually cooled his ardour, and at length he appeared, or rather fancied he appeared, very ridiculous. Merced was more silent even than usual; and her answers were given with a restraint which cut short every subject started by her interlocutor. There was, however, after all, no indication of aversion in the charming girl, nor did her thoughts or looks appear to stray from her entertainer; but, with all the prejudices of her religious faith, the Castilian maid constantly hid the merits of Herbert beneath the imaginary cloak of heresy; thus raising an insuperable barrier between her inclinations and the Protestant.

Meanwhile, the Marquesa but partially lent her attention to the Jesuit, whilst her eyes were repeatedly turned upon Herbert.

"Jayme's departure was premature," she observed, resuming the subject she had been discussing with Rodrigo. "The cause of Don Carlos is, I fear, losing ground; and my brother is hasty and rash."

"I fear not on his account; the principles I have inculcated in him from boyhood have taken root. True, I have had to contend with the impetuosity of youthful passions—to oppose a propensity to early libertinism—to guard him from the snares of vice and profligacy; but the lessons of morality I have set, both by precept and example, . . ."

"Virtuous Rodrigo!" rejoined the Marquesa, interrupting his self-commendation, "my confidence in your pupil's principles is not shaken. I alluded to the uncertain and perilous cause he has openly espoused. This qua-

druple alliance; has it not sealed the fate of Don Carlos?"

"Beware, Marquesa," said the priest, in a low voice; "here is a stranger!—be cautious what you divulge."

"Here are but *friends!*" interrupted Vicentita, with emphasis, as she turned to her English companion; "though I suspect," she added, "that *we* deserve to forfeit the name. Don Herbert has experienced an inhospitable treatment from Castilians. Don Rodrigo, you have heard of his mischance?"

"You judge your countrymen severely, Vicentita," observed De Clifford. "Are vagrants and outlaws the type of national character? And even if they were, you know your pre-eminent adage—even a Spanish beggar is still a gentleman."

Rodrigo, who had endeavoured to conceal his personal dislike to Herbert, lest its real source, jealousy, should be betrayed, could no

longer mistake the nature of the interest he had created in the sisters. Long acquaintance had, as he thought, gained him a gradual dominion over their minds; and he had thus, he hoped, reaped the reward of his assiduities. He had for some time exacted from the family a deference towards himself, which had hitherto been artfully maintained, and he took care always to remove persons seeking the society of that family whose merits were likely to eclipse his own—the accomplishment of which, owing to his masterly habit of intrigue, was rendered easy.

Their acquaintance with De Clifford already presented a formidable opposition to his control; and if its growth had not been interrupted by the wily priest, the circumstance should be attributed rather to his caution than to negligence or disinclination. But there was a degree of frankness, of open candour, and noble confidence, about the young foreigner, which baffled him—a straightforwardness and truth of

proceeding, which confounded his politic measures—an artlessness, which left no handle to the crafty Jesuit. It was a coat of armour which his weapons were not tempered to encounter. There was but one chance, he at length considered—one effective mode of ejecting De Clifford from a family over which for years himself alone had lorded it with undisputed sway; and although, from some secret source, he had collected particulars of his hated rival, which, at an earlier stage, would have prevented Herbert's intimacy with this noble household, he now felt that, if the insinuation of his opponent's disgraceful origin were overruled by their rooted predilection, any personal attempt to degrade him might betray its motive. Determined upon a more decisive course—one that should leave no appeal—he now only awaited an occasion to exasperate the passions of Herbert, and provoke him to personal aggression. His person

outraged, and cloth violated, the offender would be doomed to certain banishment.

The weak state of De Clifford's health had caused Rodrigo to postpone the intended provocation; and with policy he had assumed towards him an almost patronizing demeanour, lest, from Herbert's physical debility, the attack should prove abortive, and the attempt reveal the insidious design. But the Jesuit had calculated too much on his own powers of forbearance: a mine of accumulating and swelling hatred existed in his vindictive breast; a spark alone was wanting to effect instant explosion. This was quickly supplied by the pointed attention of the Marquesa to De Clifford; and by the timidity of Merced, who, notwithstanding the studied reserve with which she met the ardent glances of the young Englishman, was unable wholly to conceal her preference to him from the crafty monk. He had found his counsel to

the Marquesa unheeded, whilst she appealed to Herbert as to a friend; and these slights (for such he considered them) roused his ungovernable temper to revenge.

"Hospitality, forsooth!" remarked Rodrigo, alluding to the Marquesa's observation upon Herbert's mishap; "shall we seek it on the shores of Albion, where the passport to society is the measure of wealth? Rather, daughter, let me observe, our Spanish indiscrimination deserves censure. From ill-judged courtesy, every foreigner gains access even to our titled countrymen, and the impostor and the vagrant enjoy all the rites of hospitality, provided they wear an outlandish appellation."

"Courtesy, Don Rodrigo," said Vicentita, "at least accompanies the British name. Were not our outlawed emigrants pensioned by England?"

"Ostentation! purse-proud arrogance! Our noble countrymen confer an honour on them,

Marquesa, in accepting the contributions of a nation of shopkeepers."

"We should not question the motives of charitable deeds," said Herbert; "Heaven alone possesses that right, whilst suffering humanity unquestionably reaps the benefit."

"Young man, such evasion may serve *your* argument; *mine* is borne out by fact. Our easy, generous nature prompts us to greet every needy adventurer; we yield to vagabonds our confidence; nay, if they but wear an English name——"

"Señor!" said Herbert, rising.

"Mistake me not!" continued the Priest, fairly piqued into precipitation. "Now, even *now*, a base-born, vile impostor gains access to Castile's proudest halls, and presumes to call himself Herbert De Clifford."

Fired with indignation—stung to the quick, De Clifford sprang towards the Jesuit. Merced had marked the hand of Rodrigo searching in

the folds of his dress; she caught a glimpse of the shining steel; shrieking with alarm, she darted in front of the Priest. The impulse of Herbert overpowered his strength; he sank exhausted on the floor.

"Ha, ha, ha!" exclaimed the Priest, as he assumed an attitude of triumph. The page of the Marquesa, alarmed by the tumult, rushed at this moment into the room. A cry of horror burst from him, as he recoiled at the sight of the Jesuit; it seemed to resound with execration and abhorrence; whilst a look, which neither pen nor pencil can describe, was fixed upon the ghostly father.

The latter gazed in stupid wonderment upon the boy; a flash of thought succeeded the momentary aberration; and, having scrutinized those youthful features, he then, either forgetful or heedless of taking leave, with diminished importance stole away.

CHAPTER IV.

"Non è ver benchè si dica,
Che dal ciel non sia permesso
Altro pregio al nostro sesso,
Che piacendo innamorar.
Noi possiam, quando a noi piace,
Fiere in guerra accorte in pace,
Alternando i vezzi, e l'ire,
Atterrire, ed allettar."

METASTASIO.

Sketches of Character — Perilous Disclosures — Ill-timed Confidences—Their threatening Danger.

DONA VICENTITA, Marquesa de Olivares, was one of those favoured females whose minds are formed for a sphere of action less confined than that of their sex in general. Her intellect was of that acute and penetrating order which leads its owner to influence and power. Aided by

the soft, persuasive tact of feminine delicacy, her judgment guided her forward unerringly. That discernment which pointed out the secure path was also stimulated by ambition to seize every hold of power; and she had thus acquired an empire over her husband's will, founded on his deference to her superior talents.

The Marquis, although at heart a Carlist, had openly espoused the cause of the Queen. Chained, like the rest of the higher class of nobility, to the circle of the court, it was rather to the throne than to the monarch occupying it he owed allegiance. He was, moreover, no small authority amongst the members of the ministry; his opinions were occasionally requested—though not in affairs that demanded prompt decision, for the grandee was of that grave, prudent class of men, who never risk an opinion until they have slept upon it; and it was generally suspected, when he was delivered of the burthen, that he was indebted for its accumulation to his accomplished better half.

The noble Marquis, moreover, if never prompt in grave and weighty affairs, was known to be consistent in this prudent diffidence of his own powers. Seldom was he observed even to smile, unless in the presence of his wife; then, indeed, if the beautiful Marquesa displayed the symmetry of her white teeth at some facetious remark of her company, her husband was immediately seized with sympathetic mirth, and burst the bonds of habitual gravity. On some of these occasions, however, his perception came rather slowly to his aid,—when, in fact, the ebullition of merriment had ceased. In one instance, particularly, a smart repartee having passed in one of Calderon's comedies, it raised an uproar of applause. Some minutes after, the Marquis discovered the joke, and, in the middle of an affecting scene, and amidst the tears of his neighbours, enjoyed his solitary laugh.

It was not to be wondered at that Olivares should be generally submissive to his wife's rule; nor would it have required more than mediocre

intellect to wield such authority; but it needed the powers of no ordinary genius to move the wires of an automaton in the councils of state—to give it animation—speech,—to infuse into the senseless block a Promethean fire,—to render it a respected oracle; such a genius was Vicentita. Many a new "decreto real" met the eye of the elegant Marquesa, as she daily perused in her boudoir the public journals, the origin of which was her own brain,—the mechanical organ, her own lawful and noble spouse; and if she entertained a lofty consciousness which made her feel secure from rivalry, it will readily be excused in one superior to her own sex in personal charms, and almost equal to the other in mental endowments.

But there is a rock lying in the path of women on which they are frequently wrecked,—a stream, down which some passion impels them with headlong rapidity,—an *ignis fatuus*, they blindly pursue, and which lures them on to de-

struction. Man, more selfish, preserves a more steady course; so distinct and unconnected are his mental pursuits and animal propensities, that, if occasionally yoked together, it is a union mutually irksome, a partnership speedily dissolved. Womankind is more devoted: appeal to her calm judgment alone, and her lively discernment is correct; appeal to her heart, and her wits are thrown into the scale.

The warm blood of the south circulates with impetuosity; the fierce passions of love, jealousy, anger, revenge, derive from that burning clime additional force. There, too often, the anguish of a hopeless yet devoted heart finds resource in the dagger, directed by the soft hand of Castilian beauty. Though sometimes but lightly prized, the heart of woman is a noble gift;—that of man is often given, or rather lent, in a succession of attachments, and as often recalled by its owner. The smiles of woman may be lavished on many, her heart belongs only to one.

It may cool on discovering unworthiness in its choice; it may even grow callous to all it once fondly loved; but the fountain of its attachment is thereby dried up for ever.

It is not for us either to eulogize or condemn the feelings or actions of Vicentita. The beautiful Marquesa had hitherto lived aloof from all weakness. She reigned as an envied but unrelenting Sultana. Love, so far from being blind, as we are told, is, on the contrary, quicksighted. Charms are discerned by him impervious to the sight of others.

The Marquesa beheld Herbert de Clifford; love held the glass through which she gazed.

But those bright eyes,—large and dark,—she calculated too confidently on their universal fascination. Fearing no rival, her heart and mind were bestowed together. She interpreted even the reserve of the young Englishman in a light favourable to her affection. Opportunity alone was wanting, she imagined, for the avowal

of a corresponding flame; and Herbert's respect, and unconcealed admiration of her accomplishments, (the more freely expressed as he was unenslaved by passion,) contributed to confirm her anticipation.

Through the medium of her husband, Vicentita was hourly acquainted with the most important transactions of the cabinet; and consequently was well versed in the proceedings of Montreil at court. The trust reposed in her had hitherto been inviolably respected. But whether from a weak desire to enlighten De Clifford as to the extent of her own influence and information, or to encourage him to reciprocal unreserve, we know not. She unquestionably took an early opportunity to acquaint him with certain secret machinations then on foot between Montreil and the Queen's party. "It would convince him of her indirect sway; it would draw forth his confidence, and mutual advantage might be the result; for Montreil

would no doubt promote the fortunes of a secretary, whose information contributed to his success." Entertaining such thoughts, and wholly influenced by her passion, no barrier opposed itself to the disclosure of her political influence; and Herbert was entrusted with secrets of such importance, as compromised, at his discretion, the safety both of her husband and herself.

CHAPTER V.

"The end justifies the means."

SECRETA MONITA OF THE JESUITS.

WHEN Herbert sought Montreil, in order to communicate the important matter intrusted to him, he found him alone, busily occupied with papers, although the night was far advanced. The Chevalier's countenance was haggard, and his hair in disorder; one hand, passed through his locks, supported his head; while the other held a document, which he was

intently perusing. He did not hear the step of De Clifford as he entered the room, and was indeed unconscious of his presence until addressed by him. The time was ill chosen. That evening he had ascertained that the mask whom he had confidently addressed at the Santa Catalina ball as the Infanta Luisa Carlota was not that princess, and painful misgivings awakened in his breast, lest, in an enemy's hearing, he had divulged his secret machinations. Report went to say that the Queen Regent herself was there in disguise—"that very mask might have been the sovereign Christina."

"I have matter, sir, for your immediate hearing," observed his secretary.

Montreil's eye was fixed, with frightful intentness, upon Herbert.

"Reports are abroad," continued De Clifford——

"Already!" interrupted the Chevalier.

De Clifford paused. There was something

portentous in Montreil's accent; it checked his confidence, and recalled to his mind those suspicious symptoms, which had already undermined his trust. Caution he determined, though now too late, should direct his words.

"Out with your information, sir, at once," exclaimed Montreil!

"'Tis this — that you have offered to support the cause of Christina, by raising an army of English mercenaries."

"False!—Who was it told you this?" continued the Chevalier, softening his tone.

"The intimation was confidential."

"You know the person?"

De Clifford was silent.

"Mr. De Clifford!" said the Chevalier authoritatively—"I *insist.*"

"Impossible—my word is pledged."

Montreil was too well acquainted with human nature not to comprehend that some men pique themselves on the inviolability of their

promise; and, although he considered honour, in man or woman, a mere article of traffic, he knew that there were moments more favourable than others for the purchase. Concealing his impatience, therefore, he merely intimated to De Clifford, that he should easily discover the ill-advised babbler who had disseminated so idle a report.

"Nevertheless, Mr. De Clifford," he continued, "it behoves me to guard against the malignity of such inventors and promulgators of falsehood, both for my own safety, and in duty to those august personages who are implicated in such dangerous and scandalous rumours. Henceforward, sir, in my own defence, I shall instigate such surveillance over your proceedings as shall guarantee my character from the insidious aspersions of your secret and intriguing advisers."

"Chevalier!"——

"And," pursued Montreil, "if my friendship

—my protection—are of any value in your estimate, within one week bring me the name of your confidant, or——but Mr. De Clifford will not throw away his prospects upon a mere scruple. Good night," added the Chevalier, and he retired, without leaving him time to reply.

Herbert was confounded. In the first impulse of his zeal, he had hastened to acquaint the Chevalier with a report, a knowledge of the circulation of which would, were it true, serve to put him on his guard; whilst a source of information would also be opened which might be of future benefit. On the other hand, were the report without foundation, Montreil would, at any rate, become acquainted with the current opinions of the day. Well convinced was De Clifford *now* that he had touched upon a secret spring of the Chevalier's machinations. He could not be mistaken. Montreil had ventured to ingratiate himself with the

Queen's party, by an ostentatious offer to raise eight thousand foreign troops in her behalf. The double game he was thus playing was fraught with danger. He was himself haunted by frequent misgivings and fears, lest his treacherous duplicity should be discovered, and the pinnacle of his intrigue dashed to earth by his own hand.

Hence it was at a most unpropitious moment his secretary brought him the above-mentioned report. Ignorant of Herbert's high quarter of information, he at once imagined that his overtures had been mentioned with derision. Deep and calculating as he was, there were instances in which his cunning overreached itself. Had he attached importance to De Clifford's intimation, without yielding to suspicion—had he cautiously encouraged his secretary to go on benefiting him by means of such a channel of authentic information, many and great would

have been the advantages resulting. But his pride, wounded by this unexpected disclosure, overruled his judgment; he was annoyed that De Clifford should be so well informed. A still greater source of uneasiness, was the injury he might suffer, should the Carlists place any faith in the report; and by this apprehension he was goaded to rage. Anxious beyond measure to discover a clue to his secretary's knowledge of such matters, he at once resorted to his accustomed system of espionage; and the steps as well as the abode of Herbert were, from that day, watched with unceasing diligence. It was by these means that, early next morning, a letter was intercepted, directed to the Marquesa de Olivares. The name at once enlightened Montreil; he broke the seal. In it, Herbert acquainted Vicentita that, owing to some serious altercation respecting the information she had given him, he should refrain, during some days,

from visiting her, lest any trace should be found from which a discovery of the author of the report might result.

"The Marquesa de Olivares!" ejaculated Montreil, his cheek suffused with crimson; "the beautiful Marquesa!" repeated he to himself. Jealousy of De Clifford was now the predominant feeling. Not that the accomplished Vicentita had ever shared his thoughts beyond the period of her presence, when he had met her in the tertulias of some of his titled acquaintance; but he could not conceal from himself that a preference shewn to his secretary was irksome to him. The confidence which the Marquesa had placed in De Clifford was a pledge of more than ordinary regard. A medium between friendship and love he was confident existed not in woman's breast: he inferred, therefore, that she loved De Clifford. This reflection was but the precursor of others, rapid in their succession, and conclusive in their

object. The Marquesa's connexions were of that high order, that he quickly felt a control over them would be a powerful auxiliary to his success at court, and the acquirement of such control cheap at any cost. At once he resolved on one of those daring schemes which long practice alone could give a man courage to attempt and villany to pursue. Snatching a pen, he counterfeited Herbert's handwriting in a billet addressed to the Marquesa. This was not difficult to accomplish. There was some similarity in their style; moreover, the probability was, that, in so incipient an acquaintance, Herbert had not yet had occasion to write to the Marquesa. At all events, every doubt and hesitation yielded to the importance of the end in view: it was worthy the attempt. Thus ran the Chevalier's forged note:—

"Danger is brooding, beautiful Marquesa; the secret communication you have made is known to one of vindictive passions. I dare not

at present visit you. Spies follow my steps, but urgent matter must be imparted. Meet me at night-fall, at . . . ."

And Montreil waited, ere he concluded the billet, for the return of a messenger whom he had despatched to secure a convenient place of rendezvous, the direction of which was no sooner placed in his hands, than he concluded the note and forwarded it. A reply was brought, written with a hurried hand :—

" You have awakened my apprehensions—what may this mean ?—but I shall steal to the appointment. V——."

So far successful, Montreil now summoned De Clifford to his presence.

" The Minister of Finance is with the Court at Aranjuez," said Montreil to him with more than usual courtesy of demeanour. " A despatch," continued he, " is here, of the highest importance. Present it to him in person : it concerns Aguado's proposition for a loan. The

minister has invited me to give my opinion on it; and it will be necessary for you to be stationary at his residence whilst we are in communication. The britchka is at the door to convey you, as delay might be prejudicial in the affair."

De Clifford entered the carriage, and was rapidly conveyed from Madrid. No impediment remained to mar the success of the Chevalier's plot; and becoming more collected and calm, as he felt himself again in his own element of intrigue, he ordered his horse, and spurring him over the Toledo bridge, enjoyed a gallop to Caravanchel and back, long before the appointed interview with the unsuspecting Marquesa de Olivares.

CHAPTER VI.

" It is perhaps true that women generally come into life with higher ideas of delicacy than men; but I believe it true also, that they generally retire from life with lower."

MAXIMS AND CHARACTERS, BY GRENVILLE.

A successful Stratagem—Politics a Key to Love.

VICENTITA DE OLIVARES was filled with alarm on perusing the billet purporting to come from Herbert. The threatened danger was inexplicable, and she awaited the hour of appointment with an impatience so full of dread, that any certainty of the event would have been preferable to it. As the hour approached, she changed her elegant morning costume for the

basquina and mantilla; and, in order to elude all possible search, stepped into the church of the Carmen, and, after mixing for a short time with a group of devotees, glided out unseen through an opposite porch.

Love is not a mere fashion or formality with the Castilian fair; neither is it a caprice nor a game of self-interest; but it is an all-absorbing passion, an inviolable bond. All other ties, all other duties, are held secondary and subservient to it. If to betray her husband is a crime, to play her cortejo false is esteemed a still more heinous one. Society even shields illicit intercourse; but woe to the *perfidious* gallant! —opprobrium and abhorrence are *his* portion for ever.

No qualm on the subject of impropriety in keeping a secret assignation with a young man arose in Vicentita's mind. Yet her reflections were far from tranquil. Every fear was excited for Herbert; she felt none for herself. Throw-

ing aside each personal consideration, she hurried on, closely veiled by a double fold of her mantilla, more to avoid the recognition of such individuals as might retard her progress than to conceal her intention.

The Marquesa, on arriving at the house mentioned, was immediately ushered into an apartment, followed by a stranger, who fastened the door as he entered. Throwing off his cloak, the Chevalier Montreil appeared before her.

If the love-lighted eye of a Spanish woman beams with the inexpressible emotions of her bosom, so also, when hatred and revenge possess her soul, those dark full orbs dart fires of equal though different meaning. Montreil felt abashed before the dignified and contemptuous glance of the irritated Doña. But though his energy succumbed for a moment, his designs were but the more confirmed, as he beheld new beauties spring from the lofty and commanding attitude

and manner of the lovely Marquesa. The Chevalier well knew, that to prefer his suit at that moment would be fatal to his purpose. Flattery itself would be ill-timed. Tacking with the experience of a pilot who has weathered many a storm, it was with assumed anxiety for her individual happiness that he addressed her.

"Madam!—However unwelcome my presence—however base and treacherous the stratagem may appear by which I have sought this interview, willingly do I incur the displeasure it may momentarily bring upon me, if your smile shall hereafter recompense my solicitude for your safety."

Scorn alone was visible in the countenance of Vicentita. He proceeded—

"Beautiful Marquesa—your patience—I will explain. Unworthy was he who was entrusted with your confidence. Though bound by honour not to reveal your name,—that name which he

should have treasured in his inmost soul,—a mere threat wrung it from him: but 'tis safe, noble lady; 'tis in *my* keeping."

The Marquesa looked bewildered and aghast.

"Oh! if to seek a private interview — to avow—to prove my devotion be a crime, noble señorita, I have no appeal, save to your mercy. But if one that has ardently loved, though in hopeless despair, from the first hour he beheld your charms, may prefer any claim to your compassion, bestow it; pity, I beseech you, my sufferings."

Montreil sank upon his knee. The Doña, speechless and confounded, receded from the impassioned Chevalier, who still pursued his suit.

"Accomplished!—intellectual being!—were the powers and discernment which you possess also mine, the ministry of Spain should move as marionettes to the stamp of our feet. Marquesa, power invites you to influence—to rule the rulers

of a kingdom! Unite your resources to mine—and Spain, heroic Spain, speedily emancipated from the thraldom of prejudice, shall know her true benefactress. The name of Vicentita de Olivares shall then enrich the page of history."

Women are romantic — lovely enthusiasts. The sounds of glory sink melodiously into the ear, and penetrate the heart, of a female patriot.

"No! I do not deceive myself," said the artful Montreil, harping upon a string which he saw had awakened her attention. "You, indeed, are above your sex—above my own," continued the Chevalier, snatching the beautiful hand, which remained passive in his grasp. "Not for you is the false boasting of those bigoted and over-exacting chiefs of your country, who waste her resources, and secretly fan the flames of faction, in order to rise, phœnix-like, from the ashes of Iberia's ruin; who open the last veins of her wealth for their own aggrandizement. A firm, a daring hand is needed; Spain, fallen

Spain, lies prostrate, yet unconquered; be ours the task to raise her from the dust, to inspire her with fresh ardour, give impulse and direction to her slumbering powers, and place her in her proper lofty rank amidst the nations of the earth. Listen to me, Marquesa," and he pressed his daring lips upon her hand; "you have the secret confidence of the Queen—you hear the whisperings of her council—you—yes you, enchanting woman, pour the redeeming light of your understanding upon the darkness of their pride and prejudice. Assist, develop the means I shall point out for the revival of your nation's credit: the work will be your own—its reward an eternity of fame.

"Nor will I breathe a word of my passion: it shall smoulder here, if it offend, for ever;" and the emboldened suitor now pressed her hand to his breast. "Enough for me to win the enjoyment of your sun-like presence. Though my love itself can never perish, my fading hopes

shall be merged in the immensity of my respect and gratitude."

The Chevalier was impassioned, and he was handsome. Animated with a new rapture, his warmth arrayed him with youth. That refinement which he had acquired in an eminent degree, and which lent an appearance of dignity even when his solicitations were most importunate and ill-timed, failed not to make a powerful impression. No moral influences opposed his plans, which were generally but too successful.

Montreil's experience had, in short, abundantly taught him that, when the passions are once roused, even though in hostile array, a master hand may speedily turn them in favour of its owner; and he had often been tempted to exclaim, with Richard—

> "Was ever woman in this humour wooed?
> Was ever woman in this humour won?"

CHAPTER VII.

"Admiraba la region donde habia arribado, por las estrangeras extravagancias de que estaba adornada la tal espelunca, cuyo avariente farol era un candil de garabato, que se descubria sobre una mesa antigua de cadena, y papeles infinitos, asi compuestos y desordenados, escritos de caracteres matematicos, unas efemeridas abiertos, dos esferas, y algunos compases y quadrantes; ciertas señales de que vivia en el quarto de mas abajo algun astrologo, dueno de aquella confusa oficina, y embustera ciencia. . . . . Yo soy las pulgas del infierno, la chisme, el enredo, la usura, la mohatra: yo traxe al mundo la zarabanda, el deligo, la chacona, el bullicuzcuz, las cosquillas de la capona, el guiriguirigay, el zampapalo, la mariona, el avilipinta, el pollo, la carreteria, el hermano Bartolo, el carcañal, el guineo y el clorin colorado. Yo inventé las pandorgas, las xacaras, las palapatas, los comos, las mortecinas, los titeres, los volatines, los saltambancos, los maesecorrales; y al fin yo me llamo el *Diablo Cojuelo*."

The Plaza Mayor—Site of the Autos-da-fé—A Peep into the Future—Strange Revelations—A Sceptic discomfited.

In the very centre of the metropolis lies the Plaza Mayor. It forms a long square: the buildings are lofty and imposing, but on that side parallel with the Calle Mayor, the basement story is appropriated to shops and offices;

and the bustling and beggarly groups usually collected under the porticos and outer stalls, (contributing to form a market or bazaar,) detract from the imposing effect of the Plaza. No monument, no edifice of any kind, adorns the central space, but the ground there is considerably elèvated. There, for ages, the Autos-da-fé were celebrated, and there have the ashes of the victims of the Inquisition accumulated and mixed with the soil; there, denunciated as heretics by the noted Valdes, a thousand unfortunates sated with their blood the holy, the pious, the meek, the forgiving fathers of the church, under the glorious reign of His Most Catholic Majesty Philip the Second.

In the Plaza Mayor have also long been celebrated the royal bull-fights; and, some years since, on the proclamation of the Princess of Asturias, a series of grand festivities was given within its enclosure. It was Easter; and fairs, and markets, and processions, occupied succes-

sively the spacious square:—the constant attendance of mountebanks, with infallible nostrums; of charlatans, ever ready to relieve suffering humanity, at a moderate compensation, from decayed teeth, not inappropriately surrounded by music-grinders, (to set the sound masticators on edge,) playing gratis, or for a voluntary contribution! Nor would we advise the gastronome sans argent, his fast unbroken, to venture within the porches of the Plaza. What an array! Salt hams from Grenada, and sweet hams from Caudelas; turkeys fatted to death, and Montecados cream; sausages from Estremadura, and dried figs from Malaga:—

"Y buñuelos, y melones,
y el bon vin de San Martin.
* * *
De altramuces mil cestillas
y trecientas mil cosillas.
* * *
Y todos al derredor
hicieron mil maravillas
y trecientas mil cosillas."

It was evening when MacMaw, leaning on Montreil's arm, sauntered along the Plaza. He had just quitted the convivial board of the Chevalier, and was in that mood of somnolent beatitude when the fumes of a copious libation ascend to the brain, and leave their subject

> " With eyes that hardly serve at most
> To guard their master 'gainst a post."

But not so wholly paralyzed were the Colonel's faculties as to make him lose sight of that dearest object of his heart, the ever-hoped for, long-expected sash. Of late he had not ventured to importune his companion on the matter. The visits at the Palace had been rare; and, to his infinite surprise, his own unparalleled abilities had not been recently called into action. It was consequently with unfeigned interest that, in passing one of the porticos, he recognised the habitation of an indispensable purveyor to the hopes of the ignorant and ambitious—namely,

Don Xavier Traluchio, grand astrologer to the Corte of Madrid.

MacMaw had ascended several steps of the dwelling, followed by the Chevalier, ere he thought of acquainting him with the purport of his intended visit. It was therefore with a hearty laugh that Montreil ascertained the important object of the Colonel's pursuit. The humour the Chevalier was in at the moment endured the long delay which occurred, ere they could gain admittance, on the landing-place of the fifth story. After repeated knocks at the door, the bolt was at length withdrawn, and a shrill voice invited them to enter.

They found themselves in a small apartment, lighted by a lamp suspended from the ceiling. A few old chairs were placed around, and in the centre stood a table covered with ample dark baize. Before this table sat the awful interpreter of fate, the far-famed Don Xavier Traluchio.

He exhibited an elderly, shrivelled, diminutive figure, with a grey beard, which descended to his girdle. His black velvet cap was of the old Spanish magisterial cut, and his robe and collar corresponded in costume. In his right hand he held a wand, whilst his left reposed on a pile of musty books and papers covered with strange devices and figures. Around his table the floor was strewn with scrolls of dusty parchment; a globe, from which the heavens had disappeared by long use; and a telescope; while sundry equivocal-looking articles

"Were thinly scattered to make up a show."

"Vamos!" said Mac, addressing the learned Traluchio. "May it please thee to visit the planets, to consult the stars, to fly through the Zodiac, and point to the page of my destiny? Or, on the contrary, if thou holdest converse with the spirits of darkness, and art boon-companion to the arch-fiend—whatever the source of thy knowiedge, turn to the fate of MacMaw:

say, will this portly receptacle of fish, flesh, and fowl, ever be embraced by the sash of a general?"

"In the books of man there is wisdom," gravely answered Don Xavier Traluchio; "but the lore of mortals is as the darkness of night compared with the pages of heaven that are opened to the gifted one—"

"Wise and profound magician, no more of this, I pray thee," interrupted the impatient MacMaw. "Sage Traluchio, to the point:—the sash—the sash!"

"The life of man is a chain of misfortunes, of which the links are formed by expectation."

"Expectation? Zounds! *I* could have told *thee* as much myself. Expectation! do I not live upon it?"

"Not exactly," observed Montreil, drily, looking down upon his paunch. "Witness the Perégord paté!"

"The leaves of fate are of sensitive growth;

they close with the warmth of intemperance, they unfold to the believer's pledge," deliberately spoke the magician, extending the palm of his hand.

It was useless to evade the intimation, and the Colonel's fist was reluctantly thrust into his breeches pocket, all he could extract from which was a small fraction of a dollar.

"Respondent to the affection of true believers is the oracle of destiny; the secrets of the future are, like the benedictions of the church, to be won by largesses; gold—virgin gold—is the key of the depository of its knowledge."

The under lip of the Colonel dropped, and his countenance betrayed the disappointment of hope.

"But a peep, Don Xavier—a peep—just a glimpse of the sash—if it were but a tassel."

The astrologer appeared to relent. Leaning back in his chair, he drew his hand across his eyes.

"I see the horoscope of thy birth—I see the dawn of thy life—thy bootless feet and ragged kilt—I see the war-horse on the plain, and the battle phalanx advance. The bootless bairn is there—he is grown to man; but he leads not the conquering host—he lags with the baggage-train and the straggling rear."

The blood rushed to the Colonel's cheek. Montreil smothered a laugh, whilst MacMaw placed his soul in jeopardy by uttering a tremendous oath.

"My life on it, thou art no magician! What has the past to do with the future?"

"'Tis the conducting thread of thy story—the connecting link."

"Break it," said Mac, hastily, "and resume it at——"

"The sash!" added Montreil.

"I see through the mist that darkens to mortal eye the page of hereafter — I see," continued the astrologer, "the contending

factions of Iberia, the blood-thirsty Merino, and the brave Zumalacarregui. Behold the last hope of Spain — the last resource of Ísabel Segunda—'tis the elite of the Christino forces which advances to the charge — their valiant Colonel leads them on — they encounter—— Horror ! horror !" Don Xavier hid his face in his hands.

MacMaw turned pale. However ambitious of the sash, he had never contemplated earning that reward on the field of battle; the awful ejaculation of the magician, together with the look of terror wherewith it was accompanied, were too much for him, and Montreil was compelled to support the fainting hero.

The magician, meanwhile, was lost in reverie, and appeared quite heedless of his company, until the Colonel, somewhat recovering, urged him, with faltering speech, to proceed and declare the worst.

"So far shalt thou know, and no farther,

saith the oracle, unless thy offering propitiate the invisible one."

"Here!" said Montreil, as he threw gold upon the table, "here! let him learn all—even the news of his death-blow."

The prudent Traluchio, having collected the coin, proceeded:—

"The depths of time are open unto me, and the fate alike of kings and slaves disclosed. Fallen is the sceptre of an infant queen—the legitimate brother of a departed king ascends the throne. Heroes have died on the battle field—happier in that lot than are the captives. Behold the scaffold whereon proclaimed traitors shall bleed—the warrior and the civic foe, as well as the skulking agent of foreign intrigue."

Montreil was now convulsed with laughter, to which both the imperturbable gravity of the fortune-teller, and the evident agony of the Colonel, gave rise. The astrologer continued—

"Dreadful is the doom of the yellow-haired

stranger—deadly his crime; a scaffold meets his fevered eyes, and the beckoning shade of Rose Campbell marshals him to death!"

Wildly Montreil threw his eyes around, as if he (bewildered in turn) sought to interpret a dream; nor, till that voice spoke again, did he feel conscious of the realities around him. He who questioned the confirmed miracles of Heaven was far less disposed to give credence to the supernatural in a mortal, — the last of men upon whom the conjuror's art, or the magician's lore, could impose. Yet there, far from the scene of his crimes, after years of fruitless research and ceaseless remorse, a stranger proclaimed the origin of his curse and his despair.

MacMaw in the meantime began to evince impatience, and the first syllable of a fearful oath escaped his lips, whilst the remainder (linked with a memento of the sash) was driven back into his throat as the Chevalier uncere-

moniously clapped his hand on his lips, whilst the suppressed ejaculation puffed his cheeks to the full periphery of their dimensions. Don Xavier Traluchio resumed:—

"The archives of the past are opened—the secrets of the dead are revealed. I see the victim of perjured vows—I see the offspring of shame. A mother has atoned to Heaven; but the child of nature wanders in a pitiless world."

Staggered, gasping for breath, Montreil at first was unable to reply; for once totally unable to control his emotion, his attitude, his looks, revealed the tumult within.

"Mortal or demon!" he exclaimed at length, whilst the altered and hollow tone of his voice startled the Colonel, "tell me where lives, where wanders that orphan wretch? I will believe thee! for thou hast read the page of my despair—the fearful truth."

"The fate of the orphan is in the care of the all-seeing One."

"Gold, sayest thou, is the key of thy lore—behold! that will I give thee a hundredfold to learn where breathes my boy."

"In Madrid!"

The Chevalier cast an incredulous look upon the magician, whilst the improbability of such a circumstance recalled him from his weakness, and he attempted to conceal his emotion by a forced laugh.

"Now, by thy cunning witchcraft, thou shalt tell me all, or," he continued, as he snatched the Colonel's sabre from its scabbard, "thou shalt hold closer intercourse with the damned!" saying which, he sprang forward, and seized the astrologer by the beard.

Don Xavier Traluchio drew back: the long grey beard remained in the grasp of the Chevalier; whilst, on pressing the wall, an iron

panel gave way, and he instantly disappeared through the aperture, which was as instantly closed,—the dense partition receiving, and resounding with, the useless strokes of the sabre of the infuriated Montreil.

CHAPTER VIII.

" Tal della mesta, immobile
Era quaggiuso il fato,
Sempre un obblio di chiedere
Che le saria negato,
E al Dio dei santi ascendere
Santa del suo patir.

" Ahi ! nelle insonni tenebre
Pei claustri solitari,
Fra il canto delle vergini
Ai supplicati altari,
Sempre al pensier tornavano
Gli irrevocati dì."

CORO DI ADELCHI TRAGEDIA DI ALLESSANDRO MANZONI.

Interior of the Convent of the Commendadoras de Santiago—The Forbidden Guest—A dangerous Experiment.

THE aisles of the cloisters of the Señoras Comendadoras de Santiago were faintly lit by the moon, whose rays, reposing upon the marble altars of the western side of the chapel, brought

out in strong light and shadow the sculptured monuments of the dead, traced the outline of the images of catholic worship, and rested at the foot of the cross, upon the symbols of death. From without, a soft and swelling breeze played in mournful notes around the prominent buttresses of the walls. The private apartments of the nuns, the windows of which opened into the body of the church, yet were separated therefrom by iron railing, were now more completely closed by their shutters, and solemn stillness reigned throughout the abode of the brides of the Redeemer. That portion of the church where the nuns were suffered to appear before the altar, divided from the rest by massive bars, was now even still more secluded by tapestry within, as if its chaste inmates sought to veil themselves, in their privacy, even from their Maker.

An awful solemnity prevailed around; but, in that stillness of night, the marble images of the

saints and martyrs seemed to peep from their niches in the massive pillars that supported the roof, and to start into existence, to the doubtful eye, as the moonbeams played upon those life-like representations of the human form. The extended hands of a Magdalen, joined in prayer, gained, upon the attentive gaze, a tremulous motion, as if the living spirit glowed within the painted frame. The infant Redeemer, the smile of heaven on its lips, as it reposed in the Madoña's lap, was no longer the artist's creation; but, in that soft light, seemed to enjoy the healthy slumber of life. Thus, to the minds of the weak and credulous, unsubstantial forms have in all ages risen; thus, in the Necropolis of tombs, imaginative motion rises to the superstitious eye, "making night hideous."

Not a sound was heard. The form of the Queen of Heaven in awful beauty,—the dignified and devoted apostles,—the agonized martyrs,—stood forth as fraught with life in the playful

moon-ray; so wonderfully do the exquisite powers of the painter and statuary gain upon the fancy of the beholder.

But hark! the distant step of a mortal is heard in that mansion of saints. Whose foot disturbs the sacred solitude?

A tall, youthful, and martial figure emerged from a dark recess behind the high altar. He advanced with trepidation and awe. A terrible doom awaited those who were discovered, at interdicted hours, within the precints of a cloister; but he who now paced, at midnight, the solitary aisles of that convent, little dreaded the impending danger. Yet an earnestness was visible in his manner, as his glance was intently fixed upon one of the barred casements above him.

Juanita had retired, at the vesper hour, to her cell, but not to rest. A new life had been created around her. From an even and tranquil course of youth, the hurried events of a day

had launched her into a vortex of conflicting duties, withered hopes, dissevered ties, and unextinguished passion, which had induced her to contemplate that sacrifice of the world to her God, which religion taught her would constitute an atonement and consolation for all. Unconscious of the lapse of time, she sat upon her humble pallet. Darkness concealed her pallid features, while the depth of her grief repressed articulation. Isidro's name was on her lip—her own long and cherished affection in her heart; but there, in the sacred stillness of the cloister, it were sacrilege to pronounce that name! At length, a suffocating sense of sorrow obliged her to rise. She approached the window, and threw open the sash, to breathe the hallowed atmosphere of the temple. Having raised her eyes to the dark and lofty roof, she passed her hand over her forehead and traced the sign of the holy cross. She looked awhile upon the snow-white form of the Santa Virgen de los

Dolores. The moon, at that moment, threw a strong and silver ray across the marble floor of the temple. A human form moves between her and the altar: he kneels — he supplicates !—

Juanita grasped the iron bars of her casement. Her voice died away in an echo to her heart, as she recognised her own Isidro.

To whisper, to breathe a word, were danger to his life. Agony was in that moment. Isidro approached the wall; and, raising himself upon a side altar, his voice distinctly reached her ear; when the noise of an opening door suddenly alarmed them both. At the farther end of the chapel, opposite the high altar, was a space screened off for the devout ceremonies of the nuns. Massive iron bars traced the boundary of their peculiar portion of the church, and the keys of that secluded part were in the custody of the superior sister of the order. Thence came the sound. Isidro stood silent and motionless

as the marble image of the Redeemer, round which he had thrown his arm, whilst the strained gaze of his loved one, in the direction of the sound, gave a statue-like cast to her appearance.

A footstep was now distinctly heard, together with the grating of a key in the door of the sister's sanctuary, and the sacred partition moved slowly on its hinges. Dressed in the white robe of the order, appeared one of the nuns. With slow and measured step she advanced, but occasionally stopped, as if to look around upon the silent beauty of the temple. The placid light, as she turned to meet its beam, fell upon features of ashy whiteness. Tall and dignified was the bearing of the nun. On her bosom hung the cross of the order of Santiago; not, as customary, simply embroidered in scarlet cloth, but richly studded with brilliants, was that golden symbol. The glittering decoration proclaimed Her Excellency la Señora Superiora of the order.

She advanced, articulating slowly and indis-

tinctly. Overpowered by her feelings, she gained the foot of the altar under the window of Juanita's chamber, and sank to the ground. The breathing itself of Isidro was suspended, as the very statue round which he clung vibrated to the tremor of that form which clasped the hallowed crucifix.

" They told thee I was a vestal bride ! They said my breast was pure and free, Searcher of hearts ! . . . . . They said thou wast my only love, Celestial Spouse ! They dragged me to the altar stone ! My vow was a perjured one ! . . . . . They swore upon the consecrated Host —the worldly wise ! They took thy sacred robe to hide my shame—the impious ones ! . . . . .

" Virgin Maria,—spare ! My love is unhallowed love—my guilt a mother's tears for her infant lost ! . . . . .

" Where is my child — O, where? The innocent one ! Laid in the grave by an as-

sassin; who slew it for its mother's sin, to save—ah me!—a name!"

Juanita, who had watched every movement of the Sister Superiora, was thrilled with an impulse of Isidro's danger, as she beheld her drop at his feet. With that promptness of decision for which her sex are often pre-eminent in trying and extraordinary circumstances, she ran—she sprang over the space of her chamber—the dark and silent corridors—the steps—the vestibule of the cloister,—and, glancing—flying on, she passed the threshold of the sanctuary, and fell speechless and exhausted beside the Superiora.

A cold tremor crept over the form of Her Excellency Señora Belen. The hour—the spot—her own torturing and overwhelming emotions, gave a climax to her fears, and her speechless lips moved, but conveyed no sound.

By degrees the absorbing cause of her anxiety

nerved Juanita. She had resolved to appeal to Belen's heart for the preservation of Isidro. Clinging to her in a supplicating form, she raised her hand, and pointed to the daring invader of the sanctuary of the brides of heaven.

The Superiora was recovering from the abrupt intrusion of Juanita; but when she raised her eyes to the image, and beheld the form of one of that sex, doomed to suffer death if discovered there after the vesper service, all the dignity of her trust came to her aid, and, raising herself, the tall and commanding Superiora stood before the lovers in the terrible light of the arbiter of fate.

"Who art thou?" distinctly yet solemnly demanded Her Excellency.

"Isidro, Conde de Nuñes."

The Superiora drew back: she glanced suspiciously around, as if her own fears were awakened; and, seizing the arm of the despairing Juanita, led her aside.

"He must be saved," earnestly whispered Her Excellency.

Juanita sank at her feet, as if her thanksgiving were offered to a celestial being.

Motioning to Juanita to follow, Her Excellency retraced her steps to the presbitery.

"Daughter," said the Superiora, "I stay not now to reproach. Thou hast made me feel I am yet a woman. Can I visit with severity emotions once my own? Let the intruder depart as one of us. Lead him to the postern; speak not—tarry not; his life is in thy hands. Be cautious. Thy lover may be preserved; and our vestal names yet be pronounced without a blemish." Then, with a light and stealthy step, she, the proud, the commanding mistress of the temple, regained her apartment.

As she vanished in the darkness, the timid Juanita, now bold and decisive, retreated to the altar, and beckoned to Isidro to follow.

They passed the aisle, the grated portion of

the church, where none but her own sex had ever trodden before. Quickly and steadily the devoted girl moved on. The now matted floor favoured their silent progress. Juanita listened, and looked with searching eyes as she proceeded. They were within the domicile of the nuns,—the slumbering, the confiding brides of heaven. Cell after cell they passed. Night shrouded the sleeping virgins, who, unconscious of danger to their purity within their own hallowed sanctuary, had left open the doors and casements of their chambers.

Suddenly Juanita stopped: it was before the door of her own apartment. A momentary hesitation and fear seized her, and her trembling knee sank to the ground. The deep though silent prayer of her heart, however, brought solace, and strength, and confidence. She entered her hitherto vestal chamber, followed by a man. Closing the door and the casement, she sank exhausted upon the solitary chair.

Isidro, no longer the daring soldier, stood awe-struck and passive. His lofty spirit bowed at that moment before the energy and purity of the fragile being beside him.

The darkness of night had begun to grow less dense, as, kneeling at her feet, Isidro, alarmed at the consequences of his rashness, listened to his beautiful preserver.

"With the first light of day," whispered Juanita, "the sisters of the convent will proceed to matins, ere the gates of the temple are thrown open to strangers. Disguised in their saintly dress, thou must proceed, Isidro, to the postern gate. In the yet doubtful light, none will intercept thee. Here is the key. Her Excellency trusts it to thee; the first of men that ever did, the last that ever will, possess it."

"O, if the curse of Heaven is upon me," said Isidro, his voice scarcely audible to the ear into which he poured its tones,—"if from this peril I should not escape,—if infamy should

be coupled with my Juanita's name, and thy lost reputation should be my work,—will not *thy* curse fall upon me too?"

"Never—never!" exclaimed Juanita, as her arm fell upon the neck of her lover. "But tell me now,—for moments fly, and we have few to spare,—what brought thee hither at so great a stake?"

"Ask you, Juanita?"

"Alas! thou knowest I never can be thine. Heaven has forbidden it. My mother—"

"True, thy mother," interrupted Juanita's lover, "but not Heaven. Have we not sworn—have we not been betrothed? O, be not rash; pity yet may sway your parent's breast."

"Hope it not; yet, Isidro, hear me. Whilst thou livest, and in thy breast still lives thy pledge to me, with this faint, dreamy chance will I, in duty to thy generous love, suspend my purpose. But if, hereafter, death should tear thee from me, or if thy heart should

harbour love for another, then my noviciate in these cloisters ends; and, ere my spirit takes eternal flight, I shall become the mortal bride of my celestial Lord."

"My soul now thanks thee, Juanita. Hear me. This very morning I depart;—my regiment marches to the north. I came to thee for one parting look."

"My heart goes with thee," said the devoted girl, as her head sank upon his shoulder. "Be brave; but be not rash, Isidro. This civil war is fatal to the flower of our youth. Thou wilt become the mark of the Guerillas, whose deadly aim is levelled at our chiefs: thy breast will be their target," added the shuddering Juanita, as she clung to his neck. "O, then, is this our last farewell?"

"Think it not. Have I not hitherto been preserved by Heaven? Are not thy prayers my shield? My rank was won upon the battle-field."

"Hush!" said Juanita, "methinks I hear the sound of steps in the adjoining cells. The sisters are now waking with the dawn;—no time is to be lost."

"What should I do?"

"Tell me, Isidro,—since I was first known to thee,—since those childish days, when girlish fondness constituted thee, a boy, my loyal cavalier, adopted thee companion of my infant gambols, and shared with thee my little sorrows,—since, after those early years, my maiden preference grew to love, avowed in answer to thy honourable pledge,—has ever action, word, or look of mine deserved thy reprehension? Nay, Isidro, answer me. Has thine eye, or ear, ever discovered aught that the delicacy of thy judgment would condemn?"

"My pure, my own adored one, thou askest that which I am unworthy even to answer."

"Then hear that which thy safety compels me to propose."

The dawn was gaining upon the night. To the lover's eye, the lineaments of his mistress (already traced on his heart) were the more readily distinguished; and Isidro, as he looked upon Juanita's face, shuddered at the awful change those features had undergone. Beauty was indeed still there, but happiness had fled, leaving the trace of inward suffering in its stead.

"In mercy explain thyself," ejaculated Isidro.

"Away, then, with my scruples. Thou must wear the convent dress, to pass without opposition through the cloister corridors. That dress—'tis the one I wear—the only one our convent gives. Hark! I hear the early movements of the sisters. This moment neglected, thy escape were impossible. We must no longer delay. Isidro, I have ever known thee honourable. If, in thy presence,—discarding all

maiden hesitation for thy sake, thy life,—I have no alternative but to take this garment from my person,—wilt thou retain me in thy thoughts, pure as thou hast ever known me?"

"My angel saviour!"

"Well, let that pass! Think of me as thou wilt, my resolution is taken; and now, farewell! for, as thou art loyal and honest, I charge thee, when endued with the robe I resign thee, not to turn a parting look; or, as thou art now enshrined in my affections above all other mortals, so, by a turn of thy head, a furtive glance upon me, thou shalt descend to degradation and contempt in my remembrance; and from my heart I swear to excommunicate thee for ever!"

"Juanita! Juanita!" ejaculated Isidro, as he wildly pressed her to his breast, whilst he was himself more oppressed by his emotions than was the resigned, yet resolute, girl.

A few instants were snatched for the affliction

of their farewell; and then the daughter of the hidalgo Don Nepomuceno, ere she unclasped her dress, sank upon her knees, and her almost silent aspirations, as they breathed the devotion of her spirit, rose with the religious fervour of contrition for her premeditated act, as her duty to her God and to herself yielded to the imperious dictates of worldly passion.

The dawn was brightening fast, and through the casement streamed a partial light. Already the early movements of the nuns, rising to matins, seemed harmonizing with day to dispel the silence of night. The first summons of the cloister bell was heard; the next would require the presence of the sisters in the vestibule. That warning signal instantly reached the ear of Juanita, whose trembling hand had hesitated to loosen the folds of her dress. Once she had forsaken her purpose, the reflection of the duty she owed herself withheld her; but that bell,

the tones of which awakened others to being, was to her the knell of fate, and the garments fell from her virgin form.

Not once did her lover turn to gaze upon the almost denuded being beside him; those charms that for years were hidden from his passion were then exposed, and at his mercy. Isidro, in the glow of youth and ardent passion, would not for worlds have invaded the hallowed atmosphere that circled around her.

The passion of the young Conde for Juanita was interwoven with his existence; he would have sacrificed life rather than her purity should be lessened. To appreciate his affection were to define his own generous heart—the altar of an image that was its ornament and the object of his devotion. With such feelings he would have been the last to profane that shrine which he loved for its spotlessness; the last whose sacrilegious thought would destroy the temple of his own adoration.

Not a parting look, not a word was exchanged between them as the Conde, disguised in the garb of the Señoras Commendadoras de Santiago, left the chamber of Juanita. As directed, he stole along the corridors, and sought the postern gate.

Bending her ear to the ground, she perceived the last sound of Isidro's footsteps die away. Intently she listened for the sound of the postern's closing. "Hark! they speak—he is detected—No! all is still—hush! it is the bolt—the door closes—he is saved!—ha, ha!"

Juanita sank fainting on her couch.

CHAPTER IX.

" Non è sempre d'accordo il labbro, e'l core."

METASTASIO.

" His prayers are never said but to deceive us;
And when he weeps, as you think for his vices,
'Tis but as killing drops from baneful yew-trees
That rot their honest neighbour."

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

Death of Ferdinand the Seventh — His Funeral Obsequies—Montreil's Conversation with the Jesuit Rodrigo —The Chevalier's accidental Meeting with Merced— His Admiration.

SPAIN, distracted by contending parties, and torn by civil war, seems expiring through internal disease, and surrounded in her last extremity with advisers actuated by ambition or self-interest, and anxious only to advance their

own views, even at the price of her ruin. The legitimate and *well-beloved* Ferdinand, after wringing a life-interest from the vitals of his kingdom, left it sapped both of moral and physical energy; and after feeding his rapacious ambition with the most valuable of its resources, bequeathed the sceptre, a bone of contention for candidates whose desperate infatuation prompts them to rush into the field of bloody strife for the skeleton of a dominion.

At the altar, from the pulpit, the "sacred" memory of the "much-beloved" Ferdinand rises with the pious anthem to heaven. A million of masses strive to secure the despot's seat on high, as if the deep malediction of thousands of widowed hearts, the wrongs of tens of thousands of beggared orphans, were unknown to, or unappreciated by, the omnipotent King of kings.

The monastic edifice of San Isidro, properly speaking, is a chapel enclosed within the precincts of the parochial church of San Andres;

but, for extent and architecture, is of more imposing beauty, and throws the mother-temple into the shade. The portico is surmounted by the images of the twelve apostles, and the superb cupola, supported by marble columns, is of extraordinary height. The tomb of the Patron Saint of Madrid is elevated in the centre of the building upon four pillars of porphyry; and the walls of the chapel, encrusted with variegated marble, are, moreover, adorned with rare and exquisite paintings. Ornaments of azure and gold are profusely distributed over the altar, recording the gratitude of those who have been benefited by coming in contact with the remains of the beatified Isidro, which have more than once been transported from their sacred abode to the domiciles of the wealthy and great, for the performance of those miraculous cures attributed to him, when the ravages of disease were beyond the remedy of man; and veracious writers aver, that these holy relics

were not free from the attacks of the faithful, and that the remains of the saint have been sadly mutilated for the preservation of true believers—his guardians having discovered that the sale of San Isidro's extremities were a fruitful source of wealth, although tradition relates that Philip III. having purloined his great toe, the monarch was visited with the saint's indignation, and restitution alone saved his life. With such an inexhaustible means of revenue, (for it is a peculiar property of holy relics to multiply, which must needs baffle those sceptics and scoffers who may insinuate that the toes and fingers of San Isidro which have been disposed of to true believers exceed the complement of his body,) the Jesuit establishment of San Isidro may well be pronounced the most sumptuous in Madrid. Under the special patronage of royalty, from its kingly founder to Ferdinand VII., the obsequies of the monarchs were always magnificently performed at San Isidro, much upon

the principle and measure of those demonstrations of gratitude evinced at an illumination in honour of a royal birth-day by the purveyors to majesty, the extent of display being proportioned to the benefits received.

An enormous sum is expended upon the gorgeous catafalco raised to the memory of Ferdinand VII. in the church of San Isidro. The nave, the aisles, even the lofty roof, all are hung with black cloth of the finest texture. A costly gold fringe sweeps along the extensive space, and falls in graceful folds around the peering columns, terminating in clustering tassels, whence are suspended the curtains of the porch. In the centre is raised the mock sarcophagus. The most eminent architects of Spain have vied for the adoption of their respective designs, and chaste and beautiful is the one chosen. The mausoleum rises in variegated marble to the very key of the nave. From censers, supported

by the forms of nymphs, the fragrant incense exhales its spicy perfume; whilst the glare of flambeaux, usurping the light of day, (excluded by the gloomy drapery,) adds alike to the grandeur and solemnity of the scene.

Well judged was this short-lived adulation of the sycophant church; for a week the monument was the gaze of the multitude, and then removed, lest posterity should condemn the sacrilegious and fulsome panegyric.

The civic authorities, the military, the noblesse, the court, were all assembled there, to hear the eulogy pronounced upon the "*best* of men, the *first* of kings!" Many were stated to be his virtues, few his faults; and even those were so ably palliated from the pulpit, that numbers of the congregation were not a little perplexed to learn, that their judgments had erred respecting the character of the departed monarch; and that he, whom they had secretly

loathed as a ruthless tyrant, was now pronounced worthy of the crown of heaven. It could not be said of the royal defunct, that

"The good is oft interred with their bones."

The transcendent worth of Ferdinand, on the contrary, rose from the sepulchre, and, for the first time, became known to his wondering and faithful subjects.

Whatever may have been the public course of Ferdinand, none can deny that, in private life, his quiet and amiable manners won the hearts of his immediate attendants. Towards the close of his career, it was usual with him to seek pastime in the bosom of his family. Attentive at all times to the necessities of his people, even in his daily devotion to public affairs it was not uncommon with him to dictate his orders to Zea Bermudez with his children on his knees, and his wife seated beside him. Waiving, then, all the burthen of etiquette,

the prime minister was suffered to entertain him with the affairs of the day, only interrupted occasionally by the prattle of the juvenile Infantas. The domestics of the palace, and those whose rank gave them a title to Ferdinand's personal service, never experienced the slavery of caprice. Far different, indeed, was the course pursued in another wing of the palace, where the Infante Don Carlos exacted all that subserviency to the rigorous laws of royal etiquette, which was never carried to a higher pitch than in Spain.

It would be a task for La Bruyere himself to depict the versatile genius and whimsical humour of Ferdinand. At times a relentless tyrant, at others an obsequious and seemingly submissive servant to the whims of fortune, his life had been a series of contradictory acts, calculated alike to defy the pen of a panegyrist or the accuracy of an historian. To paint the man, nothing less than volumes would suffice in order

to record the inconsistency of his words with his works; what rational conclusion, indeed, could be drawn? — as, from the moment he appeared on the stage of action, the resolution of one day was annulled by the decree of the next.

The imposing ceremony at length was ended; the magnificent assemblage of mourners had vanished; deserted were the aisles of San Felipe. Montreil, however, remained, indulging in a train of thoughts produced by the solemnity of the ceremony.

"Admirable man!" said he; "more admirable king! Where didst thou learn the secret of control, that thy ashes should thus command the pomp of lamentation from the million, when the memory of a hundred saints has passed away since thy dissolution? Thou wast a king, Fernando! by this mummery I swear it—every inch a king!"

"Eloquent!" exclaimed a voice beside him:

that of the Priest Rodrigo. The Chevalier and the Priest had met before, and Montreil extended his hand.

"Philosopher!" continued Rodrigo, "what think you of my sermon?"

"Forcible as if thou hadst told a thousand truths, instead of——"

"A thousand lies!" interrupted the Priest. "I will spare you the compliment; this necrologic trade of the church is lucrative. Would that kings were more plentiful, and not overstocked with longevity. If comets, as is said, announce the departure of crowned heads, then would I say, with the Italian—

'S'è ver ch'al tuo apparìr i Rè s'en vanno
Deh! parisci ogni Dì, e dura un anno.'"

"These worthies have, however, one advantage with you; you ensure them a future mansion, and, moreover, a crown more brilliant than that they leave behind."

"Where?" smiled the Priest.

"Come, come, I understand this esprit du corps; it matters little by what means we ascend, whether through the temple of Mecca or the Vatican, so that we get there."

"Pshaw! Montreil, think you these wares of relics, and waxen dolls in glittering petticoats, deceive the crafty trader? Think you the means that purchase souls from purgatory, the bargaining with God for their salvation, can impose upon the broker?"

"You are ingenuous, Padre!"

"And you, Chevalier, profound—seeking to know how far you may venture. By heaven! (were there such a place) the architect of those same mansions above will have enough to do. The thousand suns that sparkle in our hemisphere give life and light to their ten thousand worlds, and so unending in the boundless space. Shall we, that strut upon this tiny earth, this atom in

the countless whole,—we, animalculæ upon a grain, so far presume? Preposterous! Dreamer, thy end is dust!"

Montreil listened attentively to sentiments so congenial to his own. The rustling of a female dress diverted his attention; he turned to the place whence it proceeded. Attended by her dueña, a young lady, closely veiled, was seen approaching the altar. As she drew nearer the grated shrine, the matron unfolded a small embroidered carpet upon the floor, on which the youthful fair bent her knee, in that peculiar, but graceful attitude, which pertains to the doñas of Spain. Her features could not be discerned; but that grace, that undefined attractiveness, at once delicate and dignified, which stamps with beauty even the motionless figure, was revealed in her demeanour. Piqued at the abstraction of the Chevalier, the Priest followed the direction of his ardent gaze, and,

with a practised reading of the human mind, perceived that no ordinary feeling was kindled in Montreil's breast by that kneeling female.

Already had the artful Priest conceived the hope of exercising unrivalled sway over the mind of the Chevalier, and opined that woman, lovely woman, might constitute the bond whereby his soul should be kept in thrall. As he regarded the lovely object of Montreil's observation, he, with a confidence of success in his intended machinations, merely waited to learn her name and place of abode, as if no impediment could possibly arise, as if no opposition existed in female character or reserve.

The lady's prayer was ended: followed by the Dueña, she turned to retrace her steps, and then observed the Reverend Rodrigo. Advancing towards him, she threw back her veil, and the father confessor of her family received the formal salutation of Merced de Valmarino.

"Hija!" said Rodrigo, as his face resumed

the gravity of disappointment; the hope that had flushed it vanished as she raised the veil.

With a respectful motion of her head, Merced proceeded on her way.

Never, never had the gaze of Montreil feasted upon such beauty. He, the reveller, the sated of womankind, the cursed in memory, the victim of a long-cherished, hopeless passion, now felt another and a living one usurp dominion in his heart.

Unaccountable as it may appear, the Priest, whose sweeping conclusion respecting the female character was, that they had *none*,—who, exercising undisputed control over their consciences, had availed himself of every moment of moral weakness to delude,—felt awed in the presence of one meek, one artless girl. As the confessor of her family, his influence there was unbounded; his sway over her mother's mind omnipotent; hardly less so over the minds of her sisters. He had dared to breathe his passion to the

Marquesa Vicentita; and if he had withheld his lawless professions from Juanita, it was not from any doubt of his own prevailing powers, but from a secret dread of her lover. But Merced—the timid, confiding, lovely, beautiful Merced—commanded the respect even of his thoughts. Rodrigo had never reasoned upon that respect; it had insensibly grown with his knowledge of the object.

Had the atheistical Priest ever been questioned upon the reality of angelic spirits, had he avowed the existence of such superior beings, he would have designated Merced de Valmarino as one.

As Montreil's eyes followed her to the porch, he seized the arm of Rodrigo.

"Who is she? what is the angel's name?"

"Ask De Clifford," said the grave Rodrigo; "ask *him* to name the magnet of his thoughts!"

"Ha!" ejaculated Montreil, whilst his moustache curled down with disdain, "is she of the house of the Carlist Ruy Valmarino?"

"Bravo!" said the Priest, "if you *gain* the prize as fast as you earth it, you will have more success than I anticipate."

"I have soared higher, and been successful. Think'st thou Montreil could not achieve the conquest of a girl?"

"Ay! but an angel — methinks you called her so—may be above the grasp of the mortal Montreil! We shall see. I ween," artfully insinuated the Jesuit, as the hatred he bore De Clifford influenced his speech, "that the magnificent Chevalier would soon supersede, in her eyes, every favourable impression created by his more humble countryman and dependant."

"Ha!" retorted Montreil, with evident mortification, "would you imply a *preference* for my secretary?"

"It is a peculiarity of womankind that the gift of her heart is not always an earnest of judgment. But these are trifles. Chevalier, time is on the wing. To-night we meet in the secret vaults of the Carcel; our friend the Cura will be there; be vigilant and cautious. Addios!"

The priest disappeared through a small doorway leading to the cloisters; whilst Montreil, agitated by contending emotions, slowly departed through the lofty porch.

CHAPTER X.

"There's nought so monstrous but the mind of man,
In some conditions, may be brought t' approve."
LILLO.

An unwelcome Visitor — A double and dangerous Design—Bitter Recriminations—A Bargain.

ALICE DOWNIE was seated in her garret in the Calle Mayor, beside the brasero. She had raked together the smouldering ashes to obtain a little heat, which the comfortless abode seemed to require. Her chin was supported by her hand, her elbow by her knees, and her feet resting on the ledge of the brasero. Thus she

remained lost in contemplation. Haggard and pale, her lips were more pallid than her cheek, and the disorder of her garments and hair evinced her utter desolation. Harassed by late events, in which the only object of her solicitude had been concerned, she regarded them as the commencement of a series, which would perhaps eventually tear from her arms the idol of her tenderness.

"Villain! assassin! infanticide!" were the exclamations that burst from her lips.

At that moment a knock at the door of her chamber roused Alice from her reverie.

"Open!" said a voice which made her tremble. "Open! I know, by thy muttered imprecations, thou art here!"

Hastily composing her disordered appearance, she drew back the bolt.

"Welcome, Don Rodrigo! I was wishing to see you."

The Priest looked suspiciously at Alice.

"Welcome or not, *I* now wish to see *thee!* Thou art alone?—Nay, I will convince myself," and the Jesuit inspected every nook of the apartment.

"Bolt the door!" pursued the Priest, "and then listen to me."

Alice obeyed, like an automaton over whose movements the reverend father held command.

"Sit down!"—The Priest regarded her in silence for some moments, and then proceeded.

"Thou knowest the house of Valmarino—the daughters of old Ruy: methinks thou art their English teacher. Answer me!"

"'Tis so, Señor."

"The Englishman De Clifford visits them?"

"I know him not."

"Untrue! thou hast not been the tutoress of Merced de Valmarino without discovering the girl's affection."

"She never *names* him."

"Alice! no trifling; shouldst thou oppose

my plans—but no! thou darest not. I have work for thee. This Clifford must be removed from that circle. Shake not your head, he *shall* be dismissed the house — ay, and by your agency."

"Reckon not upon my ability to serve you in this: I have no influence."

"I will create it for you! Whisper in Doña Mariquita's ear that he is a Christino; and, in the Don's, why, say that he is a bastard, a base-born wretch; the Doña's hate, and the hidalgo's pride, will do the rest."

"'Twill not suffice. Where is the proof?"

"I have it!"

"Ha?"

"Yes, from good authority, that of his master. Presuming on his easy introduction to the rank of Spain, he calls himself — the adventurer!— well born."

"Then, if proof is required, I may refer to Montreil?" said the wily Alice.

"Nay, that must be avoided; but hereafter, the Chevalier, compelled to make amends for the improper introduction of his unworthy secretary, will doubtless himself apologize to the high-born hidalgo, and dismiss De Clifford from his service. Speak, woman! shall this be done?"

"I will endeavour."

"Nay, no half-measures with me, or——"

"It *shall* be done!" hastily interrupted Alice.

"Now, hear me further. There is a wretch without the pale of society—a miscreant—a—the public hangman of the city—Marco Diaz ——What ails thee, woman? Art fearful lest his handicraft may some day dress thee for the Plazuela de Cebada? Ha! ha! But mark me! thou must seek out this refuse of our city—ay, court—caress—if need be, familiarize thyself with his features."

"To what purpose, Señor?"

"Find his abode; frequent it. Wheresoe'er that dwelling may be, there blooms a flower which should grace a fairer soil; 'tend it, lend to its growth thy cunning skill; engraft *my* name, my heart, upon its stem, and, when 'tis ripe, I'll pluck it."

The teeth of Alice chattered; a cold shudder crept through her limbs.

"Thou lookest as though my orders pleased thee not; and methinks I have of late remarked sundry tokens of reluctance. Has thy conversion really made a saint of thee? Canst thou, a base apostate, feel remorse? What carest thou for religion? The purse, the pension, was not, is not, *that* thy God?"

"Spare me, spare me!"

"I will. Do but my bidding with the hangman's daughter, and thou shalt have absolution for a host of peccadillos. Dost thou yet hesitate?"

And, in truth, Alice was still unable to

answer him; her utterance was choked with various passions and emotions. Rodrigo's countenance glowed with anger. At first he could scarcely refrain from invectives; but a moment's reflection subdued his rage, and changed his plan. He continued—

"Hear me, wretched woman! If my moderation has spared thee hitherto, it has been in consideration of thy subserviency to my will. Now I see through thy heart; thou wouldst oppose me. Alice, the hand that slaughtered the infant child of Belen is yet instinct with life; but thou art amenable to justice."

"Thou bad'st me do it!"

"Ha, ha! who will believe thee? Away! if thou seek'st not the hangman's daughter, the hangman himself shall wait on thee!"

"Stay, stay, Rodrigo!"

"On one condition! Place in my power the daughter of Marco Diaz — the beautiful Manuella."

"Grant me time to accomplish it."

"I will; but remember my eye is upon thee; delay not, trifle not, if thou holdest thy life worth the keeping."

CHAPTER XI.

"You deny that man is really so prejudiced as I suppose him; talk to him, then, of some foreign country,—ask him what religion he is of."—MAXIMS AND CHARACTERS, BY GREVILLE.

"The first thing with men is the side they take; the second, the arguments for it."—IDEM.

Suspense—A Dinner of Policy—Delights of Controversy—The Hour of rendezvous.

EACH day succeeding the masquerade brought increased anxiety to Montreil. Since the evening he had confidently addressed, as he thought, the masked Infanta Louisa Carlota, no summons to the apartments of Don Francisco had reached him. Even the Colonel had not been

again ordered on duty; and, thus disregarded, the Chevalier felt all the suspense and disappointment attendant on "hope deferred."

At the palace meanwhile, although never named, he had the supreme honour of occupying royal thought. The Queen Regent confined her surmises within her own breast. He who had given rise to them was beneath her contempt. But towards her sister, a change of demeanour was evident; she became more polite, and less affectionate. Suspicion and distrust had taken root, — grew with rapid growth,—and already put forth manifestations of that animosity which has continued to the present day; whilst Louisa Carlota, ignorant of the cause, (which, if known, her abilities would have easily counteracted,) felt hauteur and a spirit of defiance increase in proportion as the Queen gradually developed her ceremonious reserve.

Fortunately for Montreil, the very extra-

vagance and perplexity of his manœuvring formed the guerdon of his own safety. The Queen Regent, in her secret researches after the object of the Chevalier's machinations, was soon apprized that the Carlists regarded him as *their* coadjutor: by her own adherents, she was assured that he was a warm partisan of the Estatuto Real; whilst from others, her Majesty ascertained that the Englishman was a rank exaltado. She naturally concluded that he, who seemed to belong to all parties, was, *bonâ fide*, of none,—and finally dismissed him from her reflections, convinced that he was a mere adventurer; but too hastily considering him to be rather of the harmless than the mischievous order.

But a wider range was taken by the intriguing spirit of Montreil. Secretly fanning every spark of discord, he assisted to extend the train of combustion to the elements of contending factions. Ably did he fulfil the mandates of

his distinguished master; but at the same time, as was natural, took his own interests most to heart; and, although more fortunate than he could himself have anticipated, still the platform of his action skook, at times, beneath his feet.

It was a part of the policy of the Chevalier, whenever at work for a faction, to withdraw the notice of opponents at the *coup critique* by a sumptuous entertainment. As a screen, therefore, to an important plot then in active progress, Montreil had invited a numerous and distinguished assembly to dinner. Men of high rank and influence of the Queen's party met at his table; whilst, aping majesty of old, Montreil placed on his left (as his jester, or butt of his own wit,) the incomparable Coronello MacMaw, who was thus in his beloved element of grandeur, and blissfully surveyed the variety of exquisite viands placed before him. All care and business were, accordingly,

forgotten by the Colonel, save that in which his body and soul were alike, for the time, engaged. But to expect from him any *spirituel* contribution, ere the banquet concluded, were absurd. The masticatory instruments of Mac Maw were reduced, from long service, to a level with his gums; and, therefore, in order to keep pace with his appetite, he had to labour incessantly. Thus occupied, though he might not appear to belong to the *intellectual*, yet it must be admitted that he ranked as one of the *ruminating* order.

By those physiologists who contend that the soul is seated in the stomach, the Colonel's will be allowed to have been of mighty capacity. Persons who imagined the entrails to be the dispensers of genius, would have immortalized him. The Hebrews, who likewise considered them the head-quarters of intellect, would have bowed in reverence before MacMaw; and the Hindoos, who, at this hour, revere the stomach

as the fountain of thought, would have borne testimony to the profoundness of his wisdom. If, in short, the paunch should be admitted to be the repertory of our noblest faculties, well might the Colonel pride himself on the ample allotment of all-bountiful nature.

A noble and distinguished company were seated round the Chevalier's board. The dignified Spaniard is truly polite. Laying aside any pre-eminence of title, he is placed by good-breeding on the same level with his associates. Many such had honoured Montreil by their presence; upon which courtesy he looked as the effect of his own importance, and, swelling with this conviction, vaunted the glories of England and the talents of Englishmen, whilst he roundly disparaged all others.

"You have visited San Lorenzo del Escurial," said the Duke d'A——; "what impression has it left on you, Chevalier?"

"'Tis a pile of imperfections, my Lord Duke,

where the architect has rather aimed to burthen the ground than adorn it."

"But the nave of the church, painted in fresco, by Luke Cambiasi?"

"A profanation!—the painter has depicted himself seated on the right hand of his Maker. But he was rewarded for such presumption,—it was the last of his productions!"

"Still, the façade of the building?"

"The elevation of a prison-house!"

"But the altar; the tabernacle; the agathe vase for the sacrament; the emerald on the cover; the precious columns of porphyry, which climb to the elevated dome; the Pantheon, Mr. de Montreil, with its treasures of jasper and gold?" continued the Duke.

"In truth, my Lord, it is a mine of *wealth*. Nor do I question," added the Chevalier, with a sneer, "the possession of seven entire bodies of saints,—of a hundred and seven trunkless heads, a thousand veins, and toes, and fingers,

of mutilated sanctity. Nor the well-authenticated feather from an archangel's wing, and the indisputable mummy of a slaughtered infant of Herod's time.—But the site of the edifice is deplorably unfavourable. Had Philip performed his vow at Madrid, the capital of Spain might, indeed, have ranked with others. Pardon me, my Lord Duke, but I should have been more disposed to admire this building had its destination been other than to foster the lazy refuse of mankind. But a revolution will take place, and bring about an appropriation to better purposes. The Queen has issued a decree to close the noviciates of monasteries. I was the instigator of that important measure," added the Chevalier, pompously.

"Mr. de Montreil, I am aware, has access to the ante-chamber of royalty," said the Count de B——, with a sneer.

Montreil had remarked upon the brow of his guests the lowering frown of offended national

pride, and, changing the theme, endeavoured to palliate his want of courtesy; but he soon fell again into that vein of arrogance and presumption which his powers of conversation too readily abetted.

"Though the Cid Campeador breathes no longer," continued he, "the same sun warms the veins of his descendants. Yet, the materiel has not changed; it still presents the shackled mind that dares not to be free. The Spaniard, inured to mental bondage from his cradle, dreads to cast off the fetters of despotism, and proclaim himself a man. Noble friends! 'tis not a *monarch* who governs Spain,—'tis they who place the crown on each imbecile head which nods at their command—'tis the *Jesuits!* Detached from social ties, they are not *men.* Selfish and rapacious, their secret stores of wealth eternally accumulate; and could they calculate on impunity, future ages would see them the sole landholders of Spain. Their

cunning controls the consciences of kings,—they hold the lever of power,—they sway the mind !"

"Chevalier !" observed the Marquis de V——, "'tis an easy task to point out the defects of a government; but where shall we find the master-mind to cure them ?"

"Look !" said Montreil, "look to those who yet linger in exile—to those who have spent their manhood in banishment—who have visited the institutions of enlightened England—who have been schooled by adversity: recall *them !*"

"We trust them not !" resumed the Marquis, who, like many of the Spanish nobility exiled by their late despot, had now returned, having imbibed the revolutionary notions of the French school, and been himself a distinguished hero of the glorious days of the barricades: "they are neither Spaniards nor Englishmen ! 'Tis true they went to honourable exile with the proud name of patriots. They return imbued with

the selfish views of your countrymen. Those who were distinguished have been admitted into the society of your unbending and titled exclusives; and the arrogance of your noblesse has gained upon them like a contagion—revolting to our national pride and independence. Our Minas, our Arguelles, our Saavedras have been spoilt by it. If our evils arise from the Jesuits—have you none such? What are your overpaid bishops and archbishops? Sit they not on the most honoured seats in your highest court of judicature—even at the foot of the throne, legislating for reformers, yet contending for the antiquated dogmas of a church of which they have retained the superstition divested of its imposing magnificence? Is contempt of riches to be found amongst the dignitaries of an establishment which extracts yearly from the priest-ridden consciences of your pre-eminent nation a sum that would purchase all the monasteries of Spain? You say we are shackled

from the cradle — are *you* born unfettered? Whence that submission to arrogant nobility— to the insatiate rapacity of the clergy — to laws too dear to be available—to a government more expensive than any on the face of the earth, and which imposes, on the community at large, labour compared with which slavery itself is freedom? Is that mind unfettered which reveres the entailed wisdom of the first-born (and the first-born only) of titled families? Regenerated France has seen her error — has cast away the besotted privilege of primogeniture, and left the enlightened Briton to crawl in the rear of nations—in reverence, forsooth, to his ancestors!"

The valet of Montreil presented his master a note.

"A summons from the palace! Gentlemen, I regret that, for an hour, I must leave you. But my absence, my noble guests, is required for your cause. We desire the defeat of the

Carlists. The Royal Infante Don Francisco invites me to meet the ministry. I gladly offer my counsel; and, if adopted, the golden days of Spain may dawn again."

The carriage of the Chevalier received its pompous inmate, and drove to the southern gate of the palace. Montreil, alighting, bent his steps towards it; but no sooner had a turn of the building concealed him from the view of his servants, than he dashed, with hasty strides, up the street De las Platerias, and took the way to the Carcel de Corte.

CHAPTER XII.

"Va, Mignon de Dieu, essaie comme Jephté le glaive de Samson, le glaive de Judith duquel elle trencha la teste à Holoferne, le glaive des Machabées, et celui de S. Pierre duquel il coupa l'oreille à Malchus, le glaive du Pape Jules Second avec lequel il arracha des mains des Princes Setuse Imola, Fayence, Forby, Bologne, et autres villes avec grande effusion de sang. Va, sois homme robuste, et le Seigneur confirme ton bras."

Exhortations au Regicide MYSTERES DES JESUITES.

"May l'Espanya ab la Franza
Tractes agues tingût
Que totas las desgracias
Sempre de ella han vingut."

CANSÓ NOVA DELS MUALETS CATALANS.

An Evening Stroll—A Spectacle—Burial of the Heads—Old Friends under a new aspect—The Majo—A secret Conclave.

AT a point where several streets and passages meet, stands the Carcel de Corte of Madrid. It faces on one side a busy thoroughfare and the mansion of the Duque de Rivas; on another the square de Santa Cruz; and on a third, in

which is the felons'-gate, with a narrow passage between, a guard-house.

It was evening, and a large concourse of people was collected before the gates of the sanctuary. Herbert De Clifford bent his steps towards them. Ever awake to those incidents which manifest the character of a nation, curiosity beckoned him on. As he approached, a spectacle new and awful presented itself. In a shell, sufficiently raised to be seen by every one, were deposited the heads of five malefactors, who had suffered the last penalty of the law a few weeks previous. After execution, the bodies were, according to custom, decapitated, and the heads fixed upon poles erected on the spot where the crime had been committed. At the expiration of some weeks these ghastly relics were taken down, and exposed, previous to interment, to the close scrutiny of a *civilized* population. A repulsive sight, in truth; at once hideous, indecent, and

disgusting. Some of the bystanders were friends, perhaps relations, of those whose blackened heads had now become the objects of a depraved curiosity.

Wooden candelabras, with rudely-carved insignia of death, supported a few lighted tapers; and a beggarly group of monks were busied in soliciting and collecting the maravedis of the compassionate. A mournful silence reigned, although this was an ordinary exhibition. Even the most abandoned of that assemblage felt indignant at the profane pageant of a greedy church, which could thus, to gratify its insatiate avarice, resort to the most revolting means.

"By the thief who was saved on the cross," said a swarthy manchego, "that is poor Beppo!"

"He is no beauty!" observed a manolla, whose dingy garments proclaimed her extraction from the environs of the Lavapies.

"I remember him a majo of the right sort,"

said another fellow. "By the black peepers of my queridita, he was then my rival. Old goggle-eyes!—you'll never give me the jaundice again!"

"There is that saint, Ramon," said a gruff Catalonian. "I once told him he had so much affection for the church, that we should one day see him raised amongst these holy brethren," and he turned a leer upon the friar who now rattled the alms-box in his ear.

"Thou art profane, fellow!" said the frayle.

"Vaya, padre! the measure of a man's devotion is that of his sins; *he* had always a goodly score to rub off."

"By the flames of St. Anthony, that head with the eye out is old Pedro. Poor soul!—Here is a penny for it, padre."

The tinkling of a bell now announced the approach of the procession that was to escort these remains of the criminals to their last abode. A magnificent dais was supported over the host

that preceded the hearse; and some young girls, who were led to hope for remission of offences by lending their charitable aid in this last office to the dead, supported the shell.

Night had gradually closed in; and the light of the torches, with the solemn "de profundis" chaunted by the priests, gave an imposing effect to the otherwise horrible scene, whilst the contemplation of a priest-ridden populace, uncovered and prostrate before the holy Viaticum, impressed the mind of the motionless De Clifford with awe and sadness. Unconscious that it had passed by, he leant against the prison wall, overcome by a spectacle so new and revolting.

The corps de garde of the carcel was within a few paces of him. The gibes of the merry soldiery, who had dismissed with its presence all thought of the late scene, first drew his attention. The tinkling of an instrument was now heard, and a voice familiar to his ear caused him to turn in order to observe the speaker. There was a

majo in full costume handling a guitar. Around him was collected a motley group of soldiers, of tattered manollas, and ragged brown capas.

"By the sacred ear of Malchus, which was healed by the finger of Jesus, 'tis true!" said the majo.

"'The Devil is turn'd out of doors,
For Merino has taken his place;
And the blubbering Lucifer roars,
'The Cura 's the curse of my race.

"'He left me no sport upon earth,
For there he did all I've to do;
And now he has taken my berth,
Hell itself is too hot for my crew.'"

"Sing—Viva Isabella!"

"Viva! viva!" shouted his ravished hearers.

"Have you ever seen a shaggy bear, or a scaly griffin? No?—then you have not seen Merino! Noble and valiant Castilians," continued the facetious majo, "you have conquered! Valorous descendants of the immortal Cid, you have bowed the tyrant's neck, you

have crushed the snake. These eyes — yes, though I say it who should not say it,—these eyes have witnessed the soldier-priest expire— my dagger pierced his heart!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Loco!" exclaimed the amused circle.

Concealed from the charlatan by the persons around him, De Clifford gained, through the light of the lamp of the prison guard-house, a view of his features: it was Pasquale, the swarthy trooper of the soldier-cura.

It immediately suggested itself to Herbert that there was some hidden motive in this display of Pasquale's volubility. He mused for a moment, endeavouring to gain a clue to the apparent mystery. At that instant a tall figure swept past with hasty strides: Herbert's recollections carried him to the cemetery of Bayonne, and to the sudden appearance of the stranger there; but ere he could substantiate his conjectures, the dark muffled shape disappeared

through a small doorway adjoining the guard-room, unperceived either by the heedless soldiery or the diverted crowd. De Clifford marked a moment's pause in the loquaciousness of Pasquale, as he turned his keen and quick glance upon that form; but the servant of Montreil immediately after continued his facetious performances.

"Beware of his spirit!—he comes—
He comes!"

"Ha!" involuntarily ejaculated Herbert, as a man brushed past him wearing a large slouched sombrero, which was drawn over that side of his face turned to the crowd, leaving the other exposed to the gaze of De Clifford.

"He comes!" continued Pasquale, playing a march upon his guitar. "Ha, ha, ha! you tremble, my friends, as if he were within hearing of us;" and he turned his back upon the door through which the slouched sombrero had vanished.

Early in the morning of that day, Marco Diaz had returned to Madrid, bearing with him

the relics of those who had suffered by his hands a few weeks before. Most irksome to Marco was this portion of his duty; and he hurried to perform it, placing, ere dawn of day, the trophies of his handicraft in the shell designed for them in front of the chapel. He then retired, sad and dispirited, to his own apartment. No longer was that abode enlivened by the cheerful Manuella; the safety of his child required that she should shun a home wherein, owing to the degraded calling of her father, her virtue found no protection from the assaults of privileged profligacy. He, the instrument of the law, the mainspring of its execution, was himself without the pale of its protection. No longer able to defend the purity of his child, the worthy Marco resigned himself to a separation which her safety had rendered indispensable. Pacing the deserted dwelling, he now felt all the desolation of solitude; and, enjoying the range of

liberty, experienced the despair of a captive doomed to silence and a dungeon.

But even in this deep and shunned retirement, was Marco's friendship and protection courted. Men of rank had become his coadjutors in affairs of state; for Diaz, who was denied the blessings of society, had not estranged his feelings from mankind, and he had warmly espoused the cause of the unfortunate Pretender. Of no mean acquisition was Marco to the party; his abode was made the rendezvous of its leaders; and the very abhorrence of men towards the public executioner was as an invisible and impervious curtain drawn around their meetings and private machinations.

The prison-house wherein Marco resided stands in the centre of the metropolis, and was, at this time, unusually crowded. The common felons and state prisoners were indiscriminately mixed together; and, from the dun-

geons under-ground to the barred prison attics, almost every cell was tenanted either by breakers of the law, or such as had incurred suspicion for their political tenets. The outward walls are not all of ancient structure; but the basement, and subterranean vaults, were scooped out for the condemned at a period when the inquisition superintended these excavations, and still remain appropriated to the same purposes.

One apartment (and one only) of the vaults, somewhat larger than the rest, and separated from them, held no captive. No visitor entered its precints—it was the *sanctum sanctorum* of Marco Diaz. Day-light never entered there, and the lamp that now illumined its massive walls gave no certain indication of the midnight hour, although the sun had, in fact, long gone down. So secluded from all communication with the prison was the executioner's own chamber, that none could overhear the speakers within, notwithstanding an unwonted number

of persons was now assembled there, most of whom are, by this time, old acquaintances of the reader.

Upon a block long disused, but whereon the heads of titled traitors had formerly bowed beneath the headsman's axe, was seated the Bishop of Oviedo. Around him stood the principal leaders of the Carlist faction in Madrid. The ex-superintendent of police — the ex-minister of war—the procurador of the convent of Jesuits — the soldier-cura Merino —and the Englishman Montreil, were all there; whilst, leaning against the door, Marco Diaz appeared as the trusty guardian of the treasonable group. Around the vaulted apartment were hung the dresses of the condemned, the instruments of death—in a word, all the dreadful preparation and machinery of a public execution.

"Speak, and delay not, brother Rodrigo!" said the Padre Abarca, Bishop of Oviedo.

"How goes the cause?—in peril are we met, nor must we lose, in idle and fruitless discussion, our precious moments."

"Briefly, then, my Lord Bishop," said Rodrigo, "the train is set — the match alone is wanting! The vaults of San Felipe's cloisters are choked up with arms. A spark upon our magazines would blow the massive structure into air—so well are we prepared!"

"What new adherents have we gained? The Ex-chancellor Valmarino—goes he with us?"

"With heart — but not with hand. He has a foolish honesty of thought which suffers him to be only our secret friend."

"'Twere better, then, he were our foe," observed the ex-minister of war.

"True! — for he too publicly avows his enmity to Isabel, and betrays the strength of our party by his open confidence."

"He must be silenced," said Merino.

"How?"

"This night the Jesuit minions waylay the Royal Infanta. If they fail, we turn suspicion from ourselves, and cast it on Don Ruy de Valmarino! The accusation will remove his dangerous alliance."

"How!—cast the obloquy on him?"

"'Tis well devised," interrupted Rodrigo; "that matter may be left to me."

"And now, what news from our beloved King?"

"Right joyful tidings!" said Montreil. "He leaves Santarem for England."

"Out!—'tis false!—Don Carlos desert his friends? But 'twas no Spaniard said that—else should he never repeat it!" exclaimed Merino, as he waved his girdle stiletto, and vociferated a blasphemous oath.

"Leave flourishing thy carving-knife, old priest!—I tell thee he is gone to England! They have granted him a pension for life."

"Has he accepted it?" inquired the Bishop.

"Of course."

"Liar!" retorted the Cura, as he sprang forward.

Montreil flinched not; but remained firm and cool. The Cura shrank from that collected calmness in silence and awe.

"When thou hast ended thy rant, and vomited forth thy wrath, foul-mouthed Cura! I will say on."

"Peace!" said the Bishop, "I command thee, brother Merino!"

"He should have no organ but his redoubtable blunderbuss," smilingly said Montreil.

"Friends to the cause!" exclaimed the ex-superintendent of police, "dismiss your private feuds. Remember that delay may cost us our lives. We are at the mercy of our attendants. Señor Montreil, proceed."

"I repeat that Don Carlos is gone to Eng-

land, and that he accepts the pension! What then? Think ye powder and shot cost nothing? Even now he is sending arms and ammunition to Biscay; and, when he has crammed your cannon-mouths with solids for the Christinos, he will return among ye to point them against the enemy himself."

"Viva el Caballero Montreil!"

"Viva el Rey Don Carlos!" responded Montreil. "And so he shall — and govern Castile. If his *friends* will let him, his enemies will, I warrant ye!"

"How say you, Chevalier? The country is arming up the Urban Militia — they are sworn to Isabel. In Catalonia, it is reported, thirty thousand men are enrolled under Llauder!—Think you not they will stand by their colours?"

"Ay, while their jackets are new!—but as the tinsel wears off, so will the soldier. Mere novelty—foppery!—not a spark of loyalty in

a whole regiment! Pshaw! Allow them a month for the dress — half as long for the flag—and you may then whip them with your ramrods. But, first, let their martial gas evaporate;—hurry not!"

"But, Montreil, the French, some hundred thousand strong, are gaping over the Pyrenees like carrion fowl.— Have we not to fear an intervention? Shall we not strike ere it arrive?"

"It will not arrive! Strike not at the capital till the blow is sure. Then, leave the Gabachos to the contempt of women. Have not the bodies of half a million of Frenchmen, laid low by the war of independence, manured the soil of Spain? With such a cause as ours, would you fear a fifth only of that number?"

"Your hand, Montreil," said Merino, "I knew thee not: forgive my haste, and be my friend."

"Though rash, I know thee to be brave.

There, take a proof that I bear thee no enmity," said Montreil, clasping his hand.

"Now," said the Cura, "we depart. If the plot against the Infant Queen to-night prove successful, each at his post must then perform his duty. If it fail, caution and patience must be our pass-words. All will yet be well! Addios!"

"Addios!—addios!"

CHAPTER XIII.

Incompréhensible Fandango ! vous endormez la crainte, vous reveillez les sens, les scrupules s'évanouissent—vous triomphez, Fandango !"

MS. British Museum.

". . . . . ut Gaditana canoro
Incipiant prurire chori, plausuque probatæ
Ad terram tremulo descendant clune puellæ
Irritamentum Veneris languentis."

Juvenilis, Sat. ix.

The Policy of Pasquale defeated—The Bolero and Fandango — Their Antiquity — Abrupt and disagreeable Conclusion of the general Mirth.

Pasquale was yet stationed before the guard-house of the Carcel, when the visitors to Marco Diaz's apartment in the vaults made their exit from the prison. The gay Majo had been a centinel more interested than the liveried troopers on duty for the safety of some

individuals of the party within. He had most successfully diverted the crowd; and now, as he witnessed the several conspirators issue from their conference, he was anxious to retreat from his admirers in further solicitude for their proceedings. Other performances, in fact, of a less popular, but far more important nature, now engaged his attention; and, accordingly, he made sundry efforts to withdraw from the scene of his exhibition. But a dense mob of the lowest class was collected around him. The facetious "Majo," who had gratuitously provoked their hilarity, was not too readily to be parted with; and "A Bolero! A Fandango!" was the new tax imposed upon the tones of his guitar. Escape was impossible. Indeed, the dress of an Andalusian was a voucher for his gallantry; so he made a virtue of necessity, and prepared for the achievement.

More able hands have described the graceful step of the Bolero—the alluring *balancings* of

the Fandango. Harmoniously beautiful are those dances of the south, and ingeniously calculated to display the graces of the female form. Neither the voluptuous Pyrrhics, nor the pantomimes described by Homer, nor the dances of the Salii, celebrated by Denis of Halicarnassus, can compare with the ravishing step of the Fandango. Pliny maintains it was this measure that was danced by David before the ark; and Callimachus, in his hymn on Delos, has advanced an opinion that Theseus was passionately fond of it. The same dance is in fashion at Smyrna; it may be traced in Asia Minor and Georgia; but it is more especially in vogue at Cachemire.

For once, the Cachucha dance must appear before our readers divested of the attractive Andalusian costume. At the first stroke of Pasquale's guitar, a young girl sprang forward, wearing on her fingers the national music of the Bolero, (the castanets,) whilst the disguised

trooper of Merino, by the way of prelude, began—

" Claca clic, clic clac,
Fal la ra!
My merry guitar,
Ha, ha, ha!
Up to the laughing call,
Cachucha!—la ra la!
Room for the fairy ball!
To the castanet's sound, behold
What graces—what beauties unfold!"

She was a simple manolla, who now challenged attention. At first, she advanced on tip-toe, with mincing steps; then, looking over her shoulder, as if she expected her bolero would not delay, a single loud stroke from the castanets proclaimed him there. The amateurs of the Fandango, whose first glance was directed to her ancle and foot, calculated on an efficient representative of the graceful steps of the Cachucha. No tassel-work fringed the skirt of her basquina; not one ornament of art lent a borrowed charm to her appearance.

Her dress, of dark brown, was relieved neither by tinsel nor embroidery; and her hair, which, for the occasion, she had disencumbered of the mantilla of common taffety, was plainly parted, and neatly gathered on the crown of her well-shaped head. To a youthful and slender form was added rather a pretty countenance, lighted by an arch smile well suited to the cunning coquetterie of the dance; whilst her full and liquid eye aptly interpreted the language of her movements.—Nor was her partner more splendidly equipped. He was a well-built Biscayan, exhibiting a compactness and firmness that warranted the strength and activity of his limbs. No basket-work of gold buttons trimmed his jacket, lappels or cuffs; no sash girded his loins; but the modest vest and hose which he wore left exposed a manly, yet graceful form. And there was a proud — a fiery glance in his eye, and a confidence in his gait, that made ample amends for the absence of

finery. Forward he sprang, with the bounding impetus of youthful blood, as he answered the call of the castanet; while, accompanying his guitar, the would-be facetious "Majo" interpreted the story of the dance with an extempore attempt at song, thus lending a voice to the passions evinced, in the following doggerel, and suiting the tone of the effusion to the sex he personified:—

THE BISCAYAN.

Bolero, O stay!—
Thus will you fly?
Tarry, I pray,
Or, cruel, I die!
I die!—clic clic a clac!

THE BOLERO.

Short life, I fear,
Bolero, thou hast!
How often, dear,
Hast thou breathed thy last!
Thy last!—fal lal lal la!

THE BISCAYAN.

Never, I swear!

THE MANOLLA.

"Swear!"

THE BISCAYAN.

Swear!—But now—
On tip-toe—my heart
Is ready—to go!

MANOLLA.

"Go!"—clic-a-clac, clic clic clic!

The guitar and the castanets paused. Pursued around the circle, the manolla had retreated, unable to arrest the encroaching step of the bolero. Many a graceful manœuvre of her form had been essayed; but the imperious law of the cachucha, which forbade the slightest

personal contact in the dancers, gave an advantage to the pursuer — similar to the field of action of the king of a chess-board—and which was as jealously maintained.

Apparently expiring with lassitude, and gracefully sinking to the ground, the manolla looked supplication in her attitude. It was a ruse of the cachucha. Seizing a momentary absence of her partner's glance, with new life the manolla retrieved the posture of command; and, with the provocation of late defeat, pursued, in her turn, the retreating bolero. It was a strife of graceful movements, voluptuous, though tantalizing; whilst the vociferous applause around bore testimony to the abilities of the champions of the fandango.

The spectators, now warmed into interest, joined in the chorus of Pasquale's song, as he concluded each strophe.

THE BISCAYAN.

Clic a clac, clic,
In the laughing light,
Enchantress of those eyes,
To my enraptured sight,
The land of promise lies!

MANOLLA.

Distant is the land,
Trust me, adulator;
Dangerous the strand,
My circumnavigator!
Fal la ra, fal la ra!

THE BISCAYAN.

Constancy I swear!

MANOLLA.

"Swear!"
Clic a clac, clic,
Hence, thou male monstrosity!
Amongst so many fickle,
So great a curiosity
Should be preserved . . . . in pickle!
Fal la ra, fal la ra!

But more grave and earnest became the story of the cachucha. There was a piquancy of look in the Bolera, and a native elegance of attitude, when she posed, that left no regret in the by-standers for the absence of professional stage effect. As her arms waved to the music of the dance, without restraint or study, each limb, in its suppleness and beauty, appeared to derive new graces from the apparent total absence of effort. In the voluptuous struggle for conquest, the impassioned Biscayan had exchanged, for assumed admiration of his partner, a reality of interest which added to the earnestness of pursuit. Again the bewitching manolla, assuming the defensive, retired before her bolero: resisting the pantomime of entreaty, each gesture yet belied the languor of defeat.

The music paused; the rattle of the castanets ceased; and the dancers remained, for an instant, motionless. The manolla's head was

turned, her eyes fixed languishingly on her partner; whilst, with her hands crossed on her bosom, in an attitude of supplication, she again seemed to beseech him to desist. But the excited bolero, balancing his form over the imploring bolera, now appeared a ruthless conqueror, ready to grasp the laurel of victory.

The silence of the by-standers respected that momentary pause. It seemed the climax of a story of the heart; and the amorous complexion of the Madrileños assumed a gravity becoming the occasion. The glare from the lamp of the guard-house was reflected fully on the faces of the light-footed couple; and Pasquale, unheeded for the moment, dexterously slunk from the crowd.

A distant clamour was heard, like the tramp of many feet; it grew louder on the ear, and was followed by the sound of horses' hoofs upon the pavement. A distant drum-beat ensued; the guard at the prison-entrance seized their

muskets, and their drummer replied to the distant watch-call. The little crowd gradually dwindled away; the women hurried to their houses; the men leisurely withdrew, muffling themselves anxiously in their capas, and unsheathing the hidden knife.

The alarm portended danger; and shortly a troop of cavalry came at full speed, and drew up round the Carcel.

CHAPTER XIV.

" Villains' souls
Should be possessed of more than mortal courage;
They who fight men, fight equal enemies,
But they who war with conscience meet such odds,
They lose by victory: ·
and the wretches
Are not alone forbid to hope for heav'n,
But bear a hell about them!"

HILL.

An Informer—An Assassination—A practised Hand.

MONTREIL, on returning from the secret consultation in the vaults of the Carcel, retraced his steps to the Palace, and, by preconcerted arrangement, gained access to that wing of the building wherein the Infante Don Francisco

held his establishment. This prince, who had evidently been expecting the Chevalier, stepped forward to receive him, unembarrassed by the presence of his usual suite, who at that hour were always dismissed, with the exception of the indispensable attendants on his person.

"I was anxiously awaiting your arrival, my dear Chevalier."

"Royal Prince, my absence has been devoted to your service; I have earnest matter to impart."

"Your private communication led me to expect it."

"We have no hearers?"

"None but my wife."

"To the point, then! Your Highness knows my devotion to your real interests."

"I have received proof."

"The cause of the young Queen must be considered as your own, whilst all make head against the common enemy."

"You speak wisdom, Chevalier."

"Danger to the infant Isabel would be danger to yourselves. I have undeniable evidence that a plot is laid against her life this night—nay, this very hour!"

"Montreil!"

"As I have served you with zeal, noble Prince, let not aught, I pray you, transpire from our present conference that would betray your secret friend — my life were else the forfeit."

"But the evidence of what you assert?"

"Would you wait till the assassins themselves lay it before you? Haste, my royal Prince! command the gratitude of Christina for the preservation of her children's lives; your own success would be the reward."

"But——"

"C——!" exclaimed a female voice, (a detestable ejaculation, often known to escape from the royal lips of the Infanta Luisa Carlota.

"Blockhead! hasten to the Queen's apartments: quick — obey! Thanks, Chevalier, friend! trust in our consideration."

"No time is to be lost: beware of the alarbarderos on duty to-night; they are bought to a man. Secure the Queen's apartments. Farewell, my *sovereign* Princes!" and Montreil regained the carriage which awaited his return in an avenue adjoining the Palace, and in a few minutes was reseated at his own convivial board.

And now a gathering confusion was seen in the principal apartments of the Palace. Men were suddenly despatched by the private porticos; the tramp of horses' feet was quickly heard, and patrols were observed hurrying towards the eastern site of Madrid; but there was no apparent bustle amongst the citizens. No light was distinguished save that of the expiring fanals, or of the still more gloomy lamps of the Serenos.

"Para!" was ejaculated by distant voices, as a human form brushed hurriedly through the arched and dark piazzas of the Calle Mayor.

"Al asesino!" shouted several, who now gained upon the steps of the fugitive, followed by many more; but, in the darkness, they separated through the different calles leading right and left from the Street Mayor. One only followed the track of the pursued, and caught a glimpse of his person as he slunk under a portico.

"Surrender!" cried the soldier, rushing forward; while, turning quickly upon his heel, the fugitive warded off his antagonist's blade. A groan burst from the soldier, as a practised hand withdrew from his loins a knife reeking with his blood: the soldier groaned no more.

Bending his ear to the ground, to ascertain if others were in pursuit, the assassin, at the increasing sound of horses' hoofs, sprang up with agility and resolution. Casting the capa from

his person, the dress of a female in the costume of a manchega was revealed. The cloak was flung upon the murdered body, and the murderer leisurely walked away.

A corps of the Escuadron Ligero now galloped past, but none offered to molest the manchega. Half-way down the Calle Mayor, beneath a projection of porticos, he stopped; then pushing back a door, entered a long dark passage, and groped his way up a staircase. On the top landing a gentle knock announced him; the door of the apartment was instantly opened, and immediately closed again and bolted.

"Alice!" said a rough voice, "bring me water—water for my hands. You see," added the manchega, holding them up to the lamp, "they are soiled."

"Ha!" faintly muttered Alice, "is it done?"

The seeming manchega drew off his glove; it was soaked with the soldier's blood. That hand had been carefully covered; its dark

hairy surface, even to the finger-ends, would else have betrayed the owner to every Spaniard, as one stained with the heart's blood of a thousand victims of revenge.

But Alice questioned in vain. Heedless of her inquiries, and muttering in an under tone awful and blasphemous imprecations, her visitor leisurely proceeded to throw aside his disguise, and to cleanse his hands from the ghastly marks upon them. Having performed the odious ablution, the assassin received from Alice the hood and garb of a Dominican monk; and the guerilla priest, Cura Merino, was once more equipped in the outward robe of sanctity and peace, whilst beneath its folds the instrument of bloodshed was carefully retained.

"Geronimo!" exclaimed Alice, "tell me who has been thy new victim?"

"Faith, I know not; a meddling fool, take my word for it. But, with the dawn, go thy way to the Carcel, and in the public shell for

murdered bodies try to make the discovery, and bring me word at the Convent of San Francisco; I shall be there till sunset. Mark me well, woman! we have a traitor amongst us! Knowest thou the companion of Montreil—De Clifford?"

"By sight, padre! What of him?"

"He must be removed; I doubt he plays us false. To-night I passed him as I went to conference; the rascal knew me, for he staggered back. Our plot has failed: that fellow has betrayed us. At least, he could have done so, which is enough to render his death necessary. Learn his places of nightly resort, and apprize me to-morrow. My name at the convent is Fra Joachino."

CHAPTER XV.

" Let slander whisper,
Rumour has fewer tongues than she has ears."

LILLO.

Fulfilment of a preconcerted Plot—A startling Communication—Vain Insinuations.

ALICE DOWNIE (*alias*, since her recantation, Isabel Christina Downie,) arrived earlier than usual, on the following morning, to give the customary English lesson at the house of Valmarino, and seated herself in the withdrawing room, where she usually attended her pupil Merced. There was an unusual anxiety in her

looks, as they were hurriedly cast around, whilst she stealthily drew near to the door, and, applying her ear thereto, endeavoured to ascertain if any one were stirring in the adjoining apartments. All was still. Even Merced, the earliest riser of the family, had not yet made her appearance. Upon a small work-table lay various evidences of the amiable girl's taste and industry, including half-finished drawing books, and an embroidery frame, on which were already traced the initials of Alice's name, betraying for whom the souvenir was intended, spite of the playful mystery Merced had maintained on the subject. Gaining confidence from the surrounding silence, Alice hastily snatched the scissors that lay on Merced's work-table, and, cautiously stooping, ripped up a seam of the estero, or straw carpeting; then drawing from her bosom a small bundle of papers, she thrust them through the opening she had made between the matting

and the floor. Twice the colour fled from her cheeks; and her heart beat violently, as she fancied she heard the approach of steps. Twice did her trembling hands refuse to perform their diabolical task, which was, however, at length, accomplished without interruption; and, taking from her person a needle ready for the occasion, she rapidly repaired the rent she had made. She had scarcely taken her seat at the library table ere Merced glided into the room.

The playful girl, although under restraint in the presence of strangers, knew no reserve towards those she considered her friends; and, running up to Alice, she fondly threw her arm round her neck, as she begged forgiveness for the delay she had occasioned.

"Have you seen the embroidery?—not a peep?—No!" said the lively girl, as she snatched it away, "I do not wish it to be seen till it is completed."

" You look pale, child !"

" Dear Alice ! I have had little rest. There were noises in the night:—troops passing;—fearful shouts, and cries of murder ! Looking out of my window, I could perceive, by the lamps of the Serenos, the body of a man borne on a litter; and I heard say that he had been assassinated. Oh, Alice, these are fearful times !"

" Such, child, are the fruits of civil war."

" Alas ! alas ! our natures are reversed ! The dearest social ties are severed, and deadly enmity takes place of love. The friend of our childhood—the betrothed of my sister—is banished my father's house for ever !"

" He is gone to join the army of Quesada."

" Poor Juanita ! My brother has joined the troops of Carlos,—he has taken the field under Zumalacarregui."

" A brave chief ! — the Queen's troops fly

before him. The conquered are put to the sword."

"Should Jayme and Isidro encounter! But Heaven forbid!"

"Have you heard this morning's report, Merced? There was an attempt made last night to assassinate the young Queen—'tis said, by the Carlists!"

"Ha! they call my father—my mother—their children—*Carlists*. Will they now call us assassins?"

"Fear not! the desperate villains are arrested—a hot-brained student and a Jesuit!"

"Thank Heaven! Then will the innocent escape suspicion!"

Don Ruy Nepomuceno now entered the apartment, and the affectionate Merced, thankful for the safety of those she loved, evinced more than ordinary tenderness in her embrace, as she fondly saluted her father.

"What news, Alicita?" said the hidalgo

familiarly, as he observed the governess. "Have you heard the cause of last night's disturbance? They say there was an attempt on the lives of the Royal Infants."

"Such is the report, Excellency."

"But, it is false?"

"I fear it is too true, my Lord. Some are arrested — others have been informed against. It is secretly whispered that the Englishman's secretary, Herbert De Clifford, has laid information against the conspirators."

"False! — false! The Carlists would not resort to such a detestable crime to secure their cause; nor would my friend Herbert become a base informer."

Merced bent forward as the hidalgo spoke; she pressed his hand, whilst her eyes beamed with gratitude. But Don Ruy at once treated the communication with contempt, nor did the slightest change towards Herbert take place, even for a moment, in his generous breast.

A strange anomaly of principle sways the mind of the ingenuous Castilian, highly prejudicial, in some cases, to the ends of justice, and lamentably favourable to the concealment of crime. ' At this day, the most enlightened and patriotic would consider it less disgraceful to be an *assassin* than an *informer*. Often, in the courts of justice in Spain, the murderer has defied the power of the law, secure in the false sense of honour of his yet breathing, though mortally wounded victim. Often has a sufferer from the blow of the secret knife expired, with the oath of revenge on his lip, but carefully bearing the name of his murderer unrevealed to the grave.

Fortunately for Herbert, such prepossession existed in the minds of the hidalgo and his daughter; for, with that unceremonious freedom of access granted at all hours to the approved acquaintance of a Spaniard, De Clifford, unannounced, at this moment made his appear-

ance, and was welcomed by the hidalgo with more than usual warmth, as if he himself sought to redress the wrong another had inflicted.

Merced, at other times timid and reserved towards De Clifford, appeared to have forgotten her usual restraint, and even ventured to address him by the familiar appellation of Herbert. This shot electrically from his ear to his heart—it was as a spark upon a smouldering mine. So watchful is a lover's hope, so eager is he to catch and interpret all to his own wishes, that he himself coins the impression he would receive; and often, when it has become too indelible ever to be erased, discovers it to be a forgery.

To a more experienced eye than Herbert De Clifford's, the evidences of reciprocal affection would have been long revealed;—not in language, or manner, or flattering preference, visible to the world. No! — in these points, perhaps, he would have found his expectation blighted. But in the quiet unreserve of social

intercourse, he might have read the deep interest he had created in the heart of Merced. Then was each inward feeling of the generous girl displayed, as she lent a willing ear to the young Englishman's recital of his adventures, and listened, with rapt attention, to his detail of past scenes, whereof he spoke with the sentiments of a philanthropist and the unprejudiced mind of a philosopher.

Breakfast was announced. Alice withdrew, and Herbert, drawing the arm of Merced within his own, which trembled with joy, accompanied the hidalgo to the apartment of Doña Mariquita.

CHAPTER XVI.

"..... The maid that loves
Goes out to sea upon a shatter'd plank,
And puts her trust in miracles for safety."

YOUNG.

A Politic Lover—The Forsaken—Listeners hear no good of themselves.

DON JAYME'S departure to join the army of Don Carlos under Zumalacarregui was kept a profound secret even from the members of his own family; and not until he might fairly be thought beyond reach of the authorities of the Queen's government was it communicated to his

most intimate acquaintance. Paquita Manzanos was among the first to learn the motive of his absence, which he communicated to her by letter from an early stage on his route. In that despatch he recapitulated professions which were now no longer irksome to make, since no personal assiduities were requisite to maintain them.

The poor girl was alone when she received her lover's communication. Though born to affluence, her fate, from early life, had been adversity.

Her home, in its secluded position, cheerless and void of comfort, was yet, through the resources of her happy disposition, rendered essentially the abode of contentment. No vestiges, indeed, remained to indicate that sumptuousness which had attended her birth; but sufficient traces were left upon her memory to draw and appreciate the comparison with the past. Yet, unadorned and poor, Paquita was still one

of the fairest of earth's daughters. In her affection for Jayme, love had recalled her from desolation to hope. That passion, all-sufficient to the ambition of the heart which entertains it, levels distinctions, and robes penury with imaginary wealth. Paquita loved Jayme for what he *should* be—for what in fancy she had made him: she recalled to mind the honourable line of her ancestry, and hence proudly felt an equality with her lover which gave a fatal security to her dawning affections.

The letters she had received, teeming with professions of unaltered attachment, might have satisfied a mind similar to that which had dictated it. So far from concealing the worthlessness of its author, it at once revealed to the forsaken girl the extent of her misery.

A wild, long, frantic rhapsody of words escaped Paquita's lips—an incoherent strain, in which, however, were divulged the fearful consequences of her attachment, now that the

object of it was proved a base deceiver. As reason again dawned upon her mind, tears of bitter and overwhelming distress succeeded. Her father's name faltered on her tongue; that being, whose honour, in an unguarded moment, she had forgotten, now rose to her imagination as the arbiter of her actions; the injured parent now occupied the seat of thought which her lover had lately so exclusively held, and at once the consciousness of crime flashed full upon her judgment—she had brought the venerable author of her being to shame.

Pepe Manzanos that morning had ventured to the Puerta del Sol. His poverty and his rags were enveloped in his capa, which, notwithstanding the warmth of the mid-day sun, rendered a grateful protection to his pride.

A thirst for the news of the day had brought him, for once, to lay out a few maravedis for chocolate and the perusal of the gaceta. Not before he needed rest from fatigue of the walk

did he reach the Café del Prado, and ordered the pittance which entitled him to be a guest. The botega was thronged with various orders of customers. Here was a quartett of ancient gentlemen, who, from their teens upwards, had never failed at the confessional, the coffee-room, the bull-fights, and the Puerta del Sol; men who regarded every improvement as a sacrilege, and who would consider it perdition to live by any other rule than that prescribed to their forefathers.

Adjusting his wig, which had been disarranged in the vehemence of discussion, the elder of this fraternity wound up a tirade against the innovations of the modern day with a retrospective panegyric on the good olden time.

"Te recuerda—chico! When sovereignty held indeed its supremacy, and majesty of old its pre-eminence; when sentence of death was put into execution upon the subject whose daring hand had, even by accident, come into col-

lision with the sacred person of majesty. We have changed all that. The noble Dukes of Arcos no longer receive the dresses worn by majesty on the day of our Lady of September. Te recuerda!—when the Conde de Salinas dined every twelfth-day with the king;—nothing remains to tell of our good old customs, save annually the punctual attendance of the Duque de Medina Celi to present a memorial, stating his long-alleged right to occupy the throne of Castile."

Whilst these worthies were recounting such public grievances, heedless of listeners, certain guests, at another table, were equally intent upon the matter of *their* discussion; carrying it on, however, chiefly in a subdued voice. But, by degrees, the animation of their converse overcame their prudence, and, occasionally, phrases of dangerous import were overheard by parties at the adjoining tables.

"No doubt," said one, who looked significantly around, "he has joined the Facciosos."

"Buen mozo! that same Jayme," said another; "muy galan, so they say——"

"Hombre! a very Don Juan! Vaya—Soledad . . . . 'tis well known . . . . and the Marquesita . . . . and Miraposa . . . . and——"

"A very fox-hound to earth the game," said a dapper young garde-du-corps, turning a consequential leer around, which, though its master was of dwarfish stature, peered far above the retina of Don Pepe's eye, who sat at the adjoining table, and who was now inquisitively observing him.

"Vamos!" continued the garde-du-corps; "Jayme had no secrets for me. We were boon companions. Te recuerda—old Pepe—the—the—vaya!—that old mortality who went out of date when he lost his empiego and his property. Well, he had a daughter—buena

moza!—a rose! . . . . and"— he pursued in a low tone, accompanying his information with a sarcastic smile: "'tis truth," continued the speaker, now raising his voice, though not a word had been lost by the old man, who, unobserved by him, was bent over, and apparently reading, the gaceta; and, satisfied with his delivery, the garde-du-corps, as he wound up the blast of infamy to the fame of Paquita Manzanos, triumphantly puffed a prolonged cloud of smoke from his cigar; and, by way of finale, assured his companions that he had it from Jayme himself.

The old man drooped his head upon his hands, shook violently, lost his equilibrium, and fell upon the floor, seized with an epileptic fit. The waiters surrounded him, whilst our loquacious guests, incommoded by the confusion thus occasioned, rose from their seats, and as they were not responsible for their neighbour's fit, without bestowing even a common-place expres-

sion of commiseration, proceeded to make their exit from the coffee-room, inasmuch as the orthodox hour of assembly at the Puerta had now arrived.

The Square of Santo Domingo, at Seville; the Bivarrambla, at Grenada; the Zocodover, at Toledo, answering, in their end, the renown of the Puerta del Sol, at Madrid, tend to prove the nationality of that daily punctual assemblage of the Spaniards. Unlike any of the authorized and established meetings in large cities of other nations, the ruling attraction there is of a political nature, and bears analogy to that which allured a Cicero to the forum—a Demosthenes to the agoon.

Yet the pompous title of Puerta del Sol—the Gate of the Sun—is affixed to no site, no edifice, of magnificence or grandeur; the Puerta itself seems to owe its space to encroachment upon the blunted angles of several streets which meet at this point, and, from its irregular dimen-

tions, to be constituted of bits and scraps, crossings and outlets. Its convenient and central position, however, cannot be questioned; and, apparently in reverence to this Babel of topics of discussion, the city itself seems to have shewn a social tendency; for, as some quaint contemporary has justly observed, place yourself at a venture in any street of Madrid, and it will obligingly discharge you at the Puerta del Sol.

And who will deny its unparalleled excitement?—Here are concentrated, in one focus, the dandy and the tradesman, the soldier and the usurer,—there the money-dealers have their Rothschild; the lechuginos, their Beau Brummel; the politicians, their agitator; the scandal-mongers, their Joseph Surface.

An unwonted excitement pervades — more than ordinary volubility has inflated the lungs of our declamatory heroes.

"Tengo noticias!" continued our orator, who,

recovering his breath, still dove-tailed his syllables, lest any usurper of the attention of his hearers should break the link, and deprive them of his eloquence. "Se acabo!—que ministro! —Martinez is a poet—what need have we of sonnets? — cartridge-paper! Vaya! — whilst they are performing his drama of the Inquisicion de Venezia, we may fry in good earnest in that of Don Carlos! Sarsfield, Rodil, Quesada, defeated; and the poet-minister writing verses! Amigos, we are all mad!—I tell you things are desperate!" . . . .

Nor less concerned were a neighbouring group, though less vehement in their language and gesticulation; for political excitement will even convulse into agitation the limbs of a solemn Castilian; and the agitator of this party had received the cognomen of the "Telegraph of the Facciosos," his arms and legs being apparently his chief organs of communication. He was

recounting the particulars of the attempt upon the Queen's life, when the approach of strangers caused him to change the theme.

"Lord Grey's ministry has fallen," said he; as he sought to divert their indignation.

"Good tidings for Don Carlos de Bourbon," observed his neighbour.

"Would the quadruple alliance had stumbled with him! Is it known who will compose the new cabinet?"

"No such good fortune. But report says the Tories are coming in."

"Then we may hope to have no foreign intervention."

"Segun y conforme! If we have no French troops, we shall have English mercenaries: the remedy is as bad as the disease. Whig or Tory, the foreign policy of the Ingles is always the same."

More noisy, if not equally imposing, were the personages of a neighbouring group of exqui-

sites. They had just been ejected from the tienda of a fashionable jeweller in the Calle Montera, he having found, by sad experience, that not only was their gossip unprofitable to his trade, but that they impeded the access of such others as might be tempted to purchase. This proceeding might have entailed serious consequences, as his shop had long been the landmark of the aristocratic precincts of the Puerta del Sol, and, to the despair of the jeweller, was dubbed the emporium of the mode: but it fortunately occurred, one and all of the lechuginos, at that moment, espied the carriage of the Contesa Miraposa coming down the Puerta, and the lady herself smiling and nodding within. This diverted their wrath; whilst the shopkeeper availed himself of their absence to chalk upon a board, "Aquì no hay Tertulia," which he suspended at the door. The exclusives, meanwhile, were pressing forward to be noticed by the Contesa; when, as fortune would have it,

at the moment her Excellency's carriage came up, some disturbance in the street prevented its progress, and, all but getting in at the roof, they besieged it.

"Avhurr, Antonio!"

"Contesita! a los pies de Usted. I throw myself at your feet!"

"Ahi!—Ramon!—you will throw yourself under the horses!"

"Martyrdom for thee, Miraposa!"

"Tonto!—what is the fuss, there? See, they are carrying a dead body!"

"Nothing—an old man in a fit."

"Tell me, Cristoval, dost thou remember the number of the house of Pepe Manzanos?"

"Let me see!—Ha! what a coincidence. Just look — the old man they are carrying yonder! How strange!"

He, in fact, it was, whom some charitable individuals were bearing along. But the old man, who was insensible when first assisted at the

coffee-room, was fast recovering his presence of mind; and, collecting his shattered powers, now insisted on gaining unattended his abode, fearful, under present circumstances, of becoming an object of idle curiosity.

CHAPTER XVII.

" Age sits with decent grace upon his visage,
And worthily becomes his silver locks;
He wears the marks of many years well spent,
Of virtue, truth well tried, and wise experience."

ROWE.

Love, Jealousy, and Revenge — Billet-doux and Anonymous Letters.

OF all Don Jayme's female acquaintance, to Paquita Manzanos alone had he endeavoured to soften his unceremonious departure. It was a tribute to the virtues of her whom he had forsaken, and who, though deprived of his love,

still commanded his respect. As for Miraposa, his obsequiousness there had, from the onset, been prompted and maintained merely by vanity; and ere he left Madrid, the notoriety of his success with the fashionable fair one (the aim of all his attentions to her) having been duly established, he no longer devoted his time where no farther laurels were to be gathered. But it unfortunately fell out, that Miraposa, who hitherto had been a coquette at heart, for once had found her match, — "Butterflies may sport till they burn their wings," — and the volatile Marquesata was fairly caught.

Far different were the sentiments engendered in *her* breast, by the desertion of Don Jayme, from those of Paquita. No sooner had she ascertained his departure (unpreceded by a visit of leave) than, without waiting any reasonable time for an explanation by letter, her memory reverted to one poor defenceless creature, who, at an earlier stage of her acquaint-

ance with Don Jayme, she had been led to suspect was the object of his attentions. Proceeding circuitously to work, she obtained a clue to the secret of the young girl's breast, and a hateful scheme of revenge was resolved upon.

It was late, much later than usual for Don Pepe to be absent from home, when Paquita heard, at length, the well-known step ascending the stairs of their obscure abode. The bell rang twice before she could muster strength to proceed to open the door. As the latch was withdrawn, it was pushed open, and the presence of a stranger supporting the old man chased, for an instant, her own distress, as she questioned the apparent mishap of her parent. But the sound of his child's voice recalled Don Pepe to his energies, and, dismissing his companion, he gained a seat in the apartment.

Mutual silence was maintained by both. After a long pause, the old man rose from his chair, and, making some little search, drew from an old

trunk a rapier. Composure was spread over his emaciated features as, patiently and deliberately, he essayed to draw it from the scabbard; but the attempt was vain—time and rust seemed, in that abode of peace and contentment, to have identified the blade with its sheath.

After many fruitless endeavours, Don Pepe, who had hitherto appeared unconscious of the presence of his child, suddenly turned to her.

"Hija, try it,—thou art stronger, may be, than thy old father."

The girl, whose awful pallor had escaped Don Pepe's observation, suddenly felt the blood mantle on her cheek. A sinister thought took possession of her mind. Guilt is, at first, suspicious, and starts at itself.

But the twin sentiment she entertained was atonement to the parent whom she had injured; and Paquita, through an almost supernatural effort of strength, drew, with her delicate hand, the weapon from the rust-eaten case, innately

convinced that it was to be plunged in the breast of a dishonoured daughter. She presented the hilt to her father.

A smile of joy lit up the old man's face, as his eye traced the line of steel from hilt to point.

"Sit thee down, Paquita." Paquita obeyed. "This is an old friend," continued Pepe. "Five-and-twenty years ago it served me well. That spot—'tis blood, child!—blood! I drew it — the invader's. I could have wished no other dimmed it. This arm is not what it then was. No matter, justice shall nerve it."

Paquita muttered a hurried prayer.

At that instant, the door-bell rung. Don Pepe started, but Paquita listed not.

"Paquita!" said the old man, with more than usual kindness of tone, as he called her attention. His voice aroused her; and another ring of the bell sent her to the door. As she

lifted the trap of the grating, to the usual "Quieu ?"

"Un recato for Señor Don Pepe," answered the stranger, thrusting a note through the bars, and instantly disappearing. Paquita delivered him the paper.

Pepe Manzanos mechanically took the note, and laid it beside him. The avidity wherewith, at another moment, he would have perused it, was not now felt. The poor, dependent upon chance for existence itself, anticipate from every trivial occurrence an advantage. Events, simple in their nature, rise into importance. The rich, on the other hand, receive the communications of each day with indifference or suspicion : a petition—a favour to ask—forms generally the sum of the budget they receive. The poor Castilian, as friendless as he was indigent, at any other moment would have been elated by a hope of the announcement of the

long-deferred restitution of his property; but now the letter remained unopened — almost unheeded.

Pepe Manzanos was a visionary and unsophisticated being. All are not poor whom the world esteem so, and Pepe was an exception. He was a poet in spirit, for he viewed the heritage of mankind as it appeared before their fall, as it sometimes still appears to the unambitious. The pleasures which enriched his heart impoverished not his neighbour, and they were endless, for he was nature's worshipper.

The sordid mind, engrossed with worldly transactions, can never so completely free itself from earthly control as to rise above the prejudices of this sublunary scene. It is reserved for souls of a nobler order to construct an earthly elysium of their own,—to interpret the actions of men with that charity which is inherited from Heaven. The visionary is a philosopher who

infers from calamity itself a design of ultimate good—veiled for the present, indeed, by that wise hand which has mercifully concealed the future from our knowledge. The realities around him deprive not such a man of his peculiar solace; and if the flowers of fancy fade as he nears the grave, it is only to give place to brighter hues, which extend their smiling perspective beyond the tomb.

Pepe Manzanos, wasted with infirmity, decrepid, and poor, had still a youthful heart—warm both to nature and to man. At a period of life when enjoyments have usually become vapid — when taste and sense are worn and sated—he was keenly alive to pleasures which virtue ever inherits. Perhaps to his very indigence he was indebted for sensations which usually appertain exclusively to youth. To solitude he owed the simplicity of his taste, for, debarred from his own sphere of society, fortune could never prostrate him so low as to associate

with the vulgar. The hemisphere of his existence was his child and his home.

Don Jayme's visits had ever been welcomed by Don Pepe. So artfully protested were his professions of regard for the beggared Castilian, that the honest breast of the old man beat responsively. Nor was he blind to his daughter's affection, though, as in many who have reached years of discretion, the memory of tumultuous passion had passed away, and he ascribed to his child that judgment and experience which is only to be acquired with years.

His visit to the café that morning had been attended with a fearful disclosure. Jayme, the accredited visitor of his humble home, was the reported betrayer of his child. As a thunderbolt had the news struck him; but, awakened to a sense of the dishonour, the vigour of past years re-animated his wasted frame. Another duty now bound him to life—the vindication of his daughter's fame.

Not for once did a suspicion of Paquita's crime suggest itself to his mind. The dastardly calumny which had gone abroad awoke in his breast more acute feelings of paternal regard; he would atone for the attack by added affection to its victim.

It was Pepe's intention to preserve from his daughter, if possible, all knowledge of the report of her dishonour. But the busy machinations of a jealous friend were at work, and the anonymous epistle, which was, at length, handed to Paquita by her father to peruse, was destined to develop a source of lasting misery to him.

Paquita's emotion was scarce sufficiently subdued to allow articulation; and, before she had proceeded with many words, the lines, at a hurried glance, confounded her — the letter dropped from her hand, and a laugh, like the hysteric ebullition of an idiot, ensued; and when, at length grown impatient, Don Pepe endeavoured to ascertain its motive, louder than

before the fearful merriment assailed his ears. He snatched the billet from the floor; and, fast as his failing sight would permit, conned the tidings it contained. In awful contrast to those of his child, the features of Pepe waxed rigid and contracted — the smile of cheerful peace which hitherto was wont to play upon his furrowed cheek had fled, perhaps for ever.

CHAPTER XVIII.

. . . . . "Her steps alight
On earth, as moon-beams drop their silent rays,
That leave nor trace nor sound upon the night.
She moves along to mortals' wondering gaze
As if, in frolic humour, she had given,
For man's idolatry, the slip to heaven."

The *Gallop* of Quadrupeds, and the *Gallopade* of Bipeds —A Pic-Nic, and Old *Nick*.

As a blind to the real position of the government, the celebration of peace was announced, and a series of festivities proclaimed. The ostensible motive was the surrender of Don Carlos to the British Chargé d'Affaires, and his consent

to quit Portugal, as preliminaries to his acceptance of a pension upon the resignation of his right to the throne. The Puerta del Sol resounded with invectives against the English Commissioners who had refused to surrender their royal charge to General Rodil; and this honourable proceeding was maliciously interpreted by the partisans of the Queen; whilst Rodil himself, baffled from securing the prize, with ill-restrained indignation now returned with his army to the capital, to swell the mock pageant of success, which Don Carlos's departure for England was represented to ensure.

But whilst the Queen's ministry was cavilling at the amount of pension to be granted to the lawful but unsuccessful heir to the throne; whilst the sum which the British representative of the quadruple alliance had stipulated for Don Carlos's entertainment was made a matter of discussion; and, strange to say, whilst the celebration of that prince's reported resignation was

made a subject of triumph in the capital,—he was himself on his way to the Pyrenees.

The Prado, on the occasion we are speaking of, exhibited a brilliant scene. The superb avenues to the saloon walk were thronged with an immense multitude. The battalions of the Milicia Urbana sported their new-born honours, to the delight of fond mammas, sisters, and sweethearts, who already invested them with the laurels of heroes, and prophesied to their dandyism that prowess which immortalized the Cid. Happiness pervaded the countenances of all, for the ostensible object of the festival little influenced the public merriment; and Carlist and Christino greedily availed themselves of the exhibitions and sports of the day, since government paid the piper.

Among those entertainments announced to the public was a horse-race without the gate of Atocha. Thither, at the appointed hour, proceeded such as had heard of the course of New-

market, to witness that which was to rival English jockeyship. The lists were opened by the civic authorities, and forth bounded for the prize, not the trained and beautiful rivals of the race of Mameluke, or Plenipo, but a half-wild Andalusian colt, mounted by a half-naked gipsy boy, followed by competitors similarly accoutred, and tearing onwards to the goal like elfin sprites.

But night was to bring about, to the joy of the more fashionable Madrileños, that which, from the nature of the times, had become a rarity—namely, a grand ball. The lady of General R—— was the adventuress. An intimate friend of the Valmarino family, she had secured the presence of Merced and Vicentita de Olivares, and Herbert de Clifford was named in her invitations. The soirée was brilliant, and attended with avidity, but divested of nationality, from its pretensions to fashion; although the charming dancers rarely exhibited foreign em-

bellishments, the peculiar gracefulness of their persons, (ever lovely in the unvarying basquina,) possessing a fascination which depends not on mode.

The rigadon, the mazurka, the gallopade, successively displayed the native elegance of the daughters of Spain. The waltz, in its inebriating and rotatory progress, again and again delighted its votaries. The magic of its step, indeed, sympathizing in fellowship, seemed to realize the ideal of the poets, blending manly grace with the sylphid cadence of feminine beauty, and transforming each mortal pair into an angelic identity. Fascinating even to an indifferent partner, to the lover its charms arise to the voluptuous: and to Herbert de Clifford, gliding on with the blushing and beautiful Merced, at moments, as her elastic step seemed to protract its own impetus ere it touched the ground, she appeared an ethereal vision receding from a mortal's pursuit.

Amongst other visitors was the never-failing Ellena V———. Happiness, as usual, enlivened her countenance; and the pleasure of the passing moment was but a precursor to the creation of the next. The influence which her hospitality had universally acquired, gained for her every submission which politeness could shew, and thus the project of a momentary thought was quickly and easily seconded. If a charitable contribution were started by her, none dared to refuse their mite, though unwilling contributors would dub her, on such occasions, the *victimizer;* but the scheme which she was now busily fabricating was not of that order, and smiling faces welcomed the proposal—

"A pic-nic to Chamartin on horseback the following day."

"Agreed!" said Vicentita de Olivares, who was ever ambitious to shew off the accomplishments in which she excelled; "and I will answer for Merced."

"Y el caballero Ingles!" said Ellena, ere she noticed the negative movement made by Merced.

Herbert looked imploringly at his partner in the waltz ere he subscribed, and the tact of the lynx-eyed Ellena was rewarded by the acquiescence of both.

After preliminary arrangements for the general rendezvous, the amateurs again renewed the dance; and, at length, the cotillon waltz, the most popular of all, appropriately concluded the festivities of the night.

When life and its pleasures are new, and epochs of social jubilee still form the annals of our early career, they afford both prospective and retrospective joy. Long after he sought his pillow, Herbert de Clifford's emotions recalled to his mind the vivid impressions of the dance; and, at length, his imagination dwelt upon the Marquesa de Olivares. Her demeanour towards him was changed; wherefore he knew not. She was constrained, yet polite; but the

alteration affected him not, particularly now that, by every action, he had betrayed his passion for Merced.

It was no chimera—Vicentita *was* changed. The spirit of Montreil had cast a spell over her mind which had mastered it. Confidence in herself had vanished. She was yet only upon the verge of the abyss; but the impelling power shackled her will; and she, whose judgment and brilliant talents had held in thrall the minds of many, was, in spirit, the slave of one who lorded it over her with imperious sway now that she was compromised by political intrigue, and that the confidences she had made of her resources and influence at court were entrusted to a villain.

The failure of the dastardly plot to assassinate the young Queen for awhile inspired the fanatical partisans of the Carlists with more than ordinary forbearance. Fortunately for Montreil, no suspicion attached to him respecting

the miscarriage of the attempt; but the rumour which was spread of Herbert de Clifford's defection daily acquired strength. The Chevalier was made aware of this prepossession, and readily availed himself of the report to give it his apparent belief, in order to turn aside any suspicions which might otherwise be cast upon himself. His deportment, in consequence, to his secretary was more reserved, even, in the presence of others, forbidding, whilst he hesitated not, in a secret conference with the conspirators, to intimate that he watched an early opportunity effectually to rid himself of Herbert's dangerous companionship. To this end, he instructed Pasquale to trace the young man's pursuits—to follow his steps, and report on any incident which might favour his employer's intentions.

Early in the morning that followed the night of the ball at General R——'s, Pasquale entered the Chevalier's chamber long before his accustomed hour to rise, and unceremoniously awoke

him. This is, at best, a disagreeable thing; and in Montreil's estimation it constituted a capital offence which nothing could justify. But the creature of the Cura Merino, though nominally his valet, was virtually his master, for, like his chief, he was known for one who did not stand upon trifles when a man's life was in his way.

Montreil, therefore, when roused from his slumbers, suppressed his indignation as he met the insidious glance of Pasquale, and awaited a revelation of the motive of his intrusion with apparent complaisance. The wily Spaniard, however, was a diplomate in his particular way, and on an equal footing with his master in the powers of dissimulation. Whilst he was beating the bush, his master was, on the other hand, seeking his drift; and that which might have been accomplished instantaneously in a straightforward course, was not achieved till the com-

batants had flourished every weapon of defence to their mutual edification.

At length, after this desultory introduction, Montreil, constantly foiled in his object of ascertaining the secret without obvious curiosity, desired, point blank, to know the real cause for Pasquale's intrusion.

"I had nearly forgotten," answered the spy of the Cura Merino. "A proposito,—you insisted upon my surveillance of your secretary's proceedings."

"I did so; and you are aware," added the Chevalier, "that I have cause. What new treachery has he been guilty of?"

"Or should be prevented enacting?" interrupted the menial, with warmth. "Are not our lives in jeopardy? He should be," added the hireling, significantly playing with a razor which lay on the Chevalier's toilette, "removed."

"Yet would I recommend prudence, for your

own sake," answered his master. "He is a British subject, and the government of his country is jealous for the security of its sons. Nor would the minister rest till atonement were made for the assassination of an Englishman."

A pause ensued upon this observation, whilst both appeared to be in deep cogitation.

"There is a pic-nic to-day of a party of equestrians. The Marquesa de Olivares, Herbert de Clifford, Merced de Valmarino . . . ."

"Merced de Valmarino!" suddenly interrupted the Chevalier. "Where do they visit?"

"The environs of Chamartin!"

His master mused a moment, but, recollecting himself, resumed — "What mischief do you anticipate from such an innocent diversion?"

"Much, to *them*," intimated his attendant, in a low voice. "A gabilda of the Cura's troops are in the environs, recruiting for horses; the pic-nic party, I much fear me, will return dismounted."

"And your anxiety was to warn me lest De Clifford should ride my best horse, and lose him, eh?"

"Tantamount,—and something more. Suppose De Clifford were winged in the scuffle?"

"Hum!—well, I have nothing to do with it .... the affair is yours .... I know nothing," continued Montreil, who tampered with his own scruples, but did not seek to damp the energies of Pasquale.

The cautious trooper, however, was hammering at another stumbling-block in his way. Herbert usually mounted an animal which was professedly vicious; its owner had long given it up as incorrigible, and had twice effected a sale, but the purchasers, upon trial, instantly brought it back, at any sacrifice, as unmanageable, and the brute was dubbed with the sobriquet of the "Devil." Truth to say, his former owner had been thrown, and killed by the fall. Give a dog (they say) a bad name and hang him; and,

in verity, Montreil asserted that the Devil's namesake was not worth his keep. As it was, Herbert had taken compassion on the discarded quadruped, and often, with the lark, was scouring the plains of the Somo-Serra, and, in imagination, leading a steeple-chace far over the undulations and rugged hills which skirt the Segovia route.

At a time when the roving bands of Carlists were foraging up to the very gates of Madrid, such excursions were not unattended with danger. Many a solitary cavalier had been overtaken and unhorsed to furnish the cavalry of the partisans of Don Carlos. But though more than once Herbert had been followed for that object, his trusty steed distanced, without effort, his pursuers.

Conscious of the advantage which this gave him, Pasquale intimated the possibility of his escape if the "Devil" were of the pic-nic.

Montreil immediately comprehended his drift,

but, accustomed to dispense his favours for equivalent advantages, the all-absorbing subject of his thoughts now took precedence.

"Merced de Valmarino is of the party," he said, apparently repeating to himself.

"She is."

"Who commands the quadrilla of Carlists?"

Pasquale pressed his hand to his breast.

"Thou canst render me an essential service."

"This hand is yours," said the ready Spaniard, as he imagined the allusion was to his Secretary, and drew from the sleeve of his jacket the forbidden navajon, which, at a spring, betrays the keen and tapering blade of a stiletto.

"Not so fast!" said the Chevalier, who himself involuntarily shuddered, not at the naked steel, but at the reflection that such prompt assistance might, on some occasion, be as readily afforded at another's bidding against himself. "Not so fast! — this Merced — this child—I

would she were in my power. It were an easy matter, methinks."

"Frioleras! Pues—we foragers always have an eye to beauty. Horses and men for his majesty; but the lady recruits are for our pains."

"Touch not a hair of her head. Let not your hand, more than to secure her in your power, profane her person! Amigo," continued the Chevalier, softening the tone of his voice, well aware how unheeded would be a threat, "secure the prize—lead her in safety where none can trace her abode; and gold shall reward thee — ay, more than the earnings of all thy past life!"

The cupidity of the hireling was awakened.

"Name the sum, your Excellency!"

"A hundred ounces!"

"A fortune, Chevalier! — the girl is your property! In one of the passes of the Guadar-

rama lives a trusty friend to our cause,—there will I secrete the Señorita. Not all the blood-hounds of Christina's realm would earth her there."

"And now to work," said the Chevalier. "And call the groom. I shall order him to physic the 'Devil,' and De Clifford will have no alternative but to saddle 'Lazy Sal' for the field. Of the fortunes of the day bring me as speedy a report as possible."

Mutually satisfied with each other, Montreil again courted his pillow; whilst Pasquale hurried to make preparations for his formidable encounter.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Soffre pena assai funesta
Un malvagio a cui non resta
Altro frutto, che il rossore
Della sua malvagità."

An Equestrian Expedition—The Biter bit — Disconcerted Combination—Domestic Diplomacy.

It was a joyous assemblage of youth and fashion that gave rendezvous at the gate of Vicente as early after the day's meridian as the beams of a southern sun would suffer the delicate cheek of beauty to brave its declining rays. Some half-

dozen cavaliers awaited the arrival of their elegant companions, and soon was their expectation gratified by the approach of carriages, followed by grooms, leading the caparisoned horses for the fair equestrians. Alighting at the fountain facing the ascent to the gate, with ease and despatch they vaulted into their seats, and the horses sharing in the buoyancy of their riders, the party at once cantered off in the direction of the royal residence of Monalva.

A Spanish woman never aims at display which may be at the cost of the native grace of her person. Commanding and erect, each of the party sat her horse with perfect confidence; and the equestrian group pranced on, exulting in the prospect before them, which was boundless as their present happiness.

The Marquesa was attired in a tasteful admixture of Spanish costume with the orthodox riding habit. Ellena V——, who seemed in her proper element, was arrayed with judicious

adornment; and, but for her brilliant companions, would well have passed muster: whilst Merced blushed with delight through the dancing feather of a Spanish hat, and her slender form yielded to the cadence of her courser's gait, as if nature had framed her beautiful bust upon the loins of her Arabian courser.

Madrid — even the universe — receded from Herbert de Clifford's mind, as he dashed on with the buoyant troop which surrounded his beautiful Merced. Nor did the steed which bore him need the spur. He had, indeed, started from home on the back of "Lazy Sal;" but, blushing for his Rosinante, the evil was soon remedied; and, steering the jade to the dwelling of Don Ruy de Valmarino, the hidalgo ordered him his own Andalusian: De Clifford's pride, therefore, found its balm in the mettle of his new monture, despite of his preference for his old favourite, the "Devil."

Little heeded the light-hearted members of the cavalcade those rumours which had long gone abroad respecting the insecurity of the environs of the capital. The presence of Rodil's army, bivouacked at the gates of Madrid, was deemed, for the time being, a guarantee of safety, and none dreamt that the Facciosos would venture, at such an epoch, within many miles of the metropolitan walls. Our friend De Clifford, who, from impatience of limit to the range of his truly British spirit, had ventured wherever danger really existed,—secure in his prowess as a horseman, had ever, on such occasions, furnished himself with two trusty pocket-companions, whose mouths were well stowed with powder and lead; and, in this instance, more from habit than forethought, they occupied the breast, pouch usually allotted to them. Not so was it with his male associates, neither of whom, upon the very principle of personal security, would have ventured to carry arms of any

description: for, if attacked by highwaymen, resistance would incur the retaliation of *no quarter;* on the other hand, quiet submission to the banditti of Spain constitutes a guarantee for the security of life. Hence it was fortunate with Herbert that neither thought nor incident suggested a possibility of danger, as the admission of his being armed would have created more alarm, than even surprise from the Facciosos themselves.

Along the woody avenue of Las Floridas bounded the happy company, soon losing sight of the bustling entrance into the city. We shall not attempt to describe, on the present occasion, this portion of Madrid—the palace, upon its pyramidal foundation, of el punto de diamante, —or the life and animation which, at this hour of the day, borders the lazy current of the Manzanares. Identified with his story, the narrator becomes the organ of the passing sentiments and pursuits of the several actors; and, like

De Clifford, we would rather turn from the unprofitable sterility of the scenery around to the scope of beauty which was revealed in the sweet looks of his enchanting Merced. Too much enrapt by the store of happiness which they diffused, the circumstance of a light calesina which dashed by, and would have passed unnoticed by him on a more indifferent occasion, was less likely now to attract De Clifford's attention. He and his beautiful companion, however, engrossed the observation of the party within it: it was Pasquale, who, uncertain as to the road they would take, and ensconced in the hood of the vehicle, had no sooner observed them pursue the direct avenue of the Floridas than he ordered his muleteer to drive with all the velocity whereof this mode of conveyance will allow; and, in consequence, soon outstripped the playful speed of the party.

At a considerable distance, the road branches off to the left over an antiquated

arch, which here more modestly spans the insignificant stream of the Manzanares, leading to the solitary town of San Lorenzo del Escorial. Near to this spot, the uncultivated plains extend far to the right, slightly undulating in small hillocks, like those tumuli which break the surface of the Steppes of the East. Turning out of the avenue, the calesina directed its course far on over the plain, until the uneven surface offered too much impediment to celerity, when its occupant alighted; and, directing the vehicle to remain stationary where a hollow in the ground totally concealed it from view, now proceeded on foot, occasionally turning round to mark the exact line of route which Herbert and his companions, as he now observed them veer from the high road, would take; then, darting with extraordinary speed, he ran on, directing himself along a narrow ravine which lay across the path of the approaching cavalcade, and only occasionally stopping a moment to blow a small

whistle—whilst, at each blast, from a neighbouring hollow in the earth a man would suddenly rise, and follow his track, till the escort he gathered, formidable in its accoutrements, was equally formidable in numbers.

The party of esquestrians was now leisurely approaching the bank which concealed the Facciosos, who lay flat on the ground, the muzzles of their carbines and gun-barrels pointed towards them. De Clifford gazed, with rapture, on Merced and the beautiful Arab which she was reining in. To his eye, at least, no Amazon of the party was so well mounted. The notion of a steeple chace, which he imparted to her, had nothing in its novelty to intimidate her spirit; and, slackening the snaffle, she sought to gain the start of De Clifford, as she at once challenged him to the race.

At the same moment that her Arab started forward, Pasquale's men, at a given signal, sprang, with a loud shout, to their feet. The

animal bounded aside, and, affrighted, with the rapidity of lightning, struck off at the top of his speed. Heedless of all the threatening fire-arms pointed towards them—of the danger of the rest—Herbert buried his spurs in his horse's flanks, and followed the runaway's track. A bullet, at that instant, was the unceremonious message to him to stop; but, lodging skin-deep in his horse's flesh, it only served to increase the trusty creature's speed. One of the party, who had been unhorsed on the sudden attack of the Facciosos, afforded Pasquale a ready steed, and he commenced pursuit of the fugitives. It was a desperate attempt to retrieve his spoilt fortune. In vain he tore the hide from his horse's belly; the others still kept the van. Twice did his impatient hand raise the trabucio he held to fire upon De Clifford; but the Ingles had won upon the speed of Merced, and the aim might have been fatal to both. Suddenly the undulation of the ground altered their position. The

moment had arrived; and, the trigger obeying the dictates of Pasquale's maddening revenge, the slugs lodged in the neck of De Clifford's horse, who, himself unhurt, sprang to his feet. His enemy, borne on by the unspent impetus of his horse, was brought bounding up to the spot, and the trusty aim of Herbert, self-collected and firm, lodged the contents of the pocket-friend, which, on the instant, he had drawn from his breast, in the heart of his assailant, who rolled over in the sand, and expired.

Merced de Valmarino, whose self-possession had not deserted her, had, by this time, regained command of her Arab, when the double report of fire-arms struck dismay to her soul. Drooping from the saddle, her hand grasped her horse's mane, and she sank to the ground in a swoon. In this situation, breathless and panting for fear, Herbert found the lovely girl, and the beautiful animal that had so gallantly borne her along hanging his head over her, and pawing

the earth with instinctive impatience, as if anxious to carry his mistress from the scene of danger.

The night was gaining fast; yet, upon the limited horizon, De Clifford conceived that he could descry approaching horsemen. Snatching Merced from the ground, desperate through the impending peril, he seized the faithful steed, and, raising the insensible girl, with one hand clasped her and the bridle; and, as he darted away, with the other hand he drew the fellow-pistol to that which had done such execution on Pasquale. The voices of exasperation of the blood-thirsty crew, as they gained upon him, assailed his ears.

But the total darkness that had now succeeded befriended De Clifford, and the random shots which were fired after him fell harmless and spent to earth. Once the sound of another horse's hoofs were within hearing; the curse of the bandit was audibly wafted to his

ear on the breeze of night, and, in anxiety for his charge, despair directed his hand, and he fired his last pistol. The chance shot was succeeded by a faint moan, and all was still.

To some animals, it would seem that more than instinct is allotted. The trusty Arabian, whose speed had been their salvation, now, as if conscious that he had distanced the banditti, more cautiously traced his way over the uneven ground, and, suddenly alighting upon the high road to Madrid, his slackened progress seemed to impart the solace of security to his riders. Herbert pressed his unconscious Merced to his heart, her icy brow to his lips, and inhaled her balmy breath, which now gave symptoms of returning animation; whilst, grateful for the rapture of folding all he prized on earth in his embrace, he acquitted fate of every mishap, in consideration of the joy he experienced.

At length, a faint red blended in the horizon before him with the gloom of night, and a dis-

tant range of gas-lights, which traced the boundary of the royal palace, proclaimed the vicinity of Madrid. The Arabian now still more sensibly slackened his pace, halted, advanced a few yards, shook violently, and sank upon his knees. Herbert quitted the saddle, supporting Merced—they were at the gate of San Bernardino. The proffer of gold formed a key for their admission: by the same means a conveyance was found, and, in a few minutes, Merced was under the protection of her father's roof. Herbert de Clifford now returned to the gate of San Bernardino. The beautiful steed which had borne him and his mistress so gallantly, in the midst of the perils of the day, was his next care. By the assistance of torch-light, he approached the spot where it had fallen, but found the brute dead and stiff.

> "True, while a wither held him on,—
> Another, yet another stride,
> Another struggle—he had won
> The goal."

The remainder of the elegant cavalcade which had that day pranced along in the pride of fashion, beauty, and rank, was suffered to escape from the Facciosos, with the loss of their horses and money; and at length arrived, exhausted, at the gates of the city, long after the sun had set.

No mention was made of these circumstances in the public prints. Such an avowal of the audacity of the Facciosos, within view of the walls of Madrid, and at the time that twenty thousand men of the Queen's army were bivouacked at its gates, would have been an acknowledgment of the security of the enemy in the very centre of her Majesty's dominions; and but for the dandies of the unhorsed party, who gave out that no less than the entire forces of the Cura Merino had surprised them, posterity would have remained in ignorance of the event.

When De Clifford reached his own dwelling, his appearance created a momentary surprise in

the Chevalier, which was, however, immediately disguised. With more than his accustomed affability towards his Secretary, he sought to learn the particulars of his excursion. But the misgivings which Herbert, had, from an early acquaintance, formed of Montreil's integrity, had now ripened into a conviction of his villany. The attempt of Pasquale upon his life disclosed to him insidious designs from a higher quarter; and the hypocrisy of Montreil's present affected demeanour confirmed his suspicions. Evading, with seeming indifference, the questions which were put to him, (which, however, ill concealed the impatience of the Chevalier,) De Clifford did not once allude to the attack of the banditti, much less to that mortal retribution which he had dealt upon their leader.

It remained for the Chevalier to ascertain from the lips of Vicentita de Olivares the particulars of the encounter; and, at an early opportunity, he learnt from her those details also which

Merced had been enabled to give. All the latter remembered, however, was the report of the fire-arms, and the sight of the body of a bleeding man, as De Clifford, unhorsed, sprang forward to her rescue, when she fainted. Through the faction itself, Montreil was subsequently made acquainted with the death of his servant, and policy bound him to silence upon the event within the dominions of her Most Catholic Majesty Isabel Segunda.

CHAPTER XX.

"I will not say———
How this fond aching heart has bled for him;
How watch'd the thund'ring mine at midnight sieges,
Throbb'd in the war, and sicken'd in the storm."

SEWELL.

Political Confidences — Conventual Confidences — The Bulletin of Fate.

DON RUY DE VALMARINO and his lady received De Clifford with unaffected cordiality. The circumstance of Merced's escape from peril through the gallant interposition of the young Englishman was sufficient, on his entrance, to

give an additional glow of pleasure to the cheek of the hidalgo; and Doña Mariquita, who, for her own part, never performed an act of generosity without some politic end in view, readily persuaded herself, from Herbert's devotion to her family, that he was at heart a Carlist. Not for a moment would her pride admit that the lawless band which had waylaid the pleasure-hunting and peaceful party were Facciosos, and of the reputed army of the warlike Cura Merino; but she rated them as ordinary banditti, and in no degree was her preconceived opinion of Herbert de Clifford's politics shaken. In her anxiety for Don Carlos' success, she committed an error, common enough in its nature, and adopted as her fixed opinion, (without making any allowance for abstract freedom of thought, judgment, or political bias,) that all were of her own party who were not avowedly opposed to it.

Notwithstanding the quadruple alliance, she

was well apprised that the Pretender received ample assistance from England; and though party opinion there was strongly marked, she did not doubt that the majority sided with her upon the point, and that the probabilities were in favour of De Clifford's being, as well as his companion, secretly in the interest of the faction. But Herbert, who had listened to many inuendos from the Doña on this subject, had replied to none: she attributed his silence to a praiseworthy circumspection, which shielded the actual purpose of his stay at Madrid from the surmises of opponents. Meantime, her confidence increasing upon acquaintance, Herbert found himself, although unwillingly, yet from motives of policy, the recipient of general information upon the proceedings of the Carlists.

The Doña held in her hand a despatch which she had just received; and after the usual compliments, she resumed the persual of it, whilst

the family were taking chocolate with the azucarillos. "Ah!" exclaimed she, as she read aloud, "a division of General Quesada's army was surprised by the Carlists, surrounded, and defeated; the officers ordered to be shot; Leopold O'Donnell, Colonel ——, Count ——"

The Doña's voice was suddenly suppressed as she read on. Having concluded the despatch, she approached her escritoir, and placing the printed bulletin she had received from the headquarters of the Carlist division under Zumalacarregui, in an envelop, directed to her daughter Juanita, she ordered a messenger to leave it at the convent gate.

At the Convent of the Commendadoras of Santiago, affairs followed their diurnal course as usual; and the messenger in question arrived at that hour when a short respite from devotions allowed the sisters an interval for worldly thoughts. Juanita was seated beside the superiora; a bond of mutual confidence and

trust united them, as did likewise the yet stronger tie of sympathy in each other's woes. The superiora, in fact, took a heartfelt interest in the affairs of the young novice; for Isidro de Nuñez was a name long cherished in her own family, with which he was connected by relationship.

A mine of treasured sorrows had been sprung in the breast of Belen by the gentle sympathy of her companion. She at first unveiled her griefs in detached portions, yet ever clothed with that reserve and delicacy suited to the ears of her youthful companion.

"Daughter of a grandee of the first order," said she, "the authors of my existence became the zealous preservers of my rank; while the noble blood that flowed in my veins was the warm and passionate heritage of Castilian birth. Juanita! the generous affections of our countrywomen are proverbial; they are not to be bought. Education has not fitted us, like the

blue-eyed girls of Albion, to be victims of chance,—tamed, schooled, and trained,—their hearts in leading-strings. Nor are we mercenary, as those of France. No! we are Nature's own:—

"I loved him as we never love but once; but that has passed away. They told me he espoused the church to fly the vengeance of my powerful sire. The Jesuit's garb protects the father of my child!"

Belen's hand, which at first lay passive in that of Juanita, now firmly grasped it. Her features grew rigid and stern; there was a momentary convulsion of her form, and a wild rolling of her eyes, at which Juanita shuddered; but, when suffocating with anguish, a flood of tears came to her relief.

"Love has passed, and with it my passions; all, save one, in which all others centre. I have been one on whom the looks of sovereignty have fallen in homage to my charms. They

told me I was matchless, and my pride was banqueted with praise.

"My folly vanished at my infant's birth; my heart no longer revelled in these vanities; I had no mind, no heart, save in a mother's love; yet I had not wept thus if it had died beneath my eyes,—if, lingering, I had watched it steal away, with Heaven's benison upon its stiffening form!"

The two companions were essentially different in their comportment. The high-born superiora appeared to wear, in aspect and manner, her native pre-eminence; whilst the meek Juanita suffered no more evidence of her rank and education to transpire than was consistent with her notions of decorum. One exacted, the other inspired, esteem; yet, in the depth of their solitude, they found the level of sociability by opposite concessions. The confidences of the superiora humbled her spirit by acknowledged weakness; whereas Juanita avowed her

inmost thoughts with the exalting consciousness of purity.

One of the handmaidens of the Señoras Commendadoras now entered the apartment, and presented Juanita with a letter. Her hand instinctively trembled as she received it; and when the servant had retired, she placed it in those of Belen, whilst a shudder pervaded her frame.

"What is it, Juanita?" said the superiora, as she observed the trepidation of the timid girl.

"It is my mother's writing!"

"I am thy mother now," said the superiora; "my authority here supersedes even hers."

But vain were the intimations of Belen. Never before had occasion elicited an epistle from Doña Mariquita, which had not contained some mandate replete with severity and control. In the letter now received, Juanita had anticipated

either harsh injunctions or ill tidings, and she could not therefore at first assume resolution to break the seal; but at length she tore it open, and, as she sought to collect instantaneously the matter it comprised, a printed despatch met her hurried glance.

The superiora looked earnestly in Juanita's face, and her interest increased as she marked the novice advance in the perusal of the communication; but, starting suddenly, she caught the girl in her arms, as, deprived of sensibility, Juanita at the same moment staggered towards her. Not a murmur escaped the maiden's lips; she seemed, as Belen supported her, to have dropped into a quiescent lethargy, rather than to be suffering under mental pains. The superiora's anxiety, however, became stronger as her charge continued to give no token of consciousness; and at length, alarmed, her excellency summoned assistance, and Juanita was borne away to her own chamber.

Belen, meanwhile, had again taken the letter from the clenched hand which held it, and, rapidly glancing at the contents, her eyes rested on one passage—a few fatal words—on seeing which she no longer marvelled at the novice's change of demeanour. A sentence had been underlined by some officious correspondent, purporting that Colonel Isidro, Conde de Nuñez, was made prisoner by the troops of the Carlist General Zumalacarregui, and ordered instantly to be shot!

CHAPTER XXI.

"En este infausto dia,
Recuerdo a tanto agravio;
Suspiros brote el labio
Venganza el corazon.
Miradnos, sacros Manes,
Gemir en triste coro
La faz bañada en lloro
Y el alma en odio y hiel.
Mas sangre en vez de llanto
Se os debe por tributo
Y en vez de adelfa y luto
Trofeos y laurel."

HYMNO POR DON J. N. GALLEGO.

Anniversary of the Massacre of the Prado—the Defeat of Quesada—Murderous Reprisals—Hospiticides.

THE second of May was ushered in at Madrid with the usual lustre of an Iberian sun—

"Not, as in northern climes, obscurely bright,
But one unclouded blaze of living light."

Yet it may be relevant to know why, with such studious and jealous care, the officials of a church in the Calle Mayor had excluded his minutest

beams, and, robing the lofty casements within in black drapery, had extended those gloomy hangings around the walls, and spread them in heavy folds before the porticos. The ordinary and more humble devotees were even forbidden admission; whilst a corporal's guard of the Granada regiment was on duty to inspect the rights of entry.

The anniversary of the second of May lives in the hearts of the citizens. Six-and-twenty years had now elapsed since their intrepid countrymen, Daoiz and Velarde fell; and, with them, a holocaust of patriots expiated, under the musketry of the legions commanded by Joachim, the crime of opposing a treacherous invader.

" No osando los malvados
Lidiar con desarmados
En lucha desigual:
Mintiendo en el semblante
Su rabia vengativa
Cubrieron con la oliva
Su perfido puñal."

This execrable massacre was, not long after, avenged; and the extirpation of the hated oppressors, preached by the men of God from the Bidassao to the Columns of Hercules, propitiated, by the slaughter of half a million of the enemy, the manes of the victims at the Prado.

" En tanto a sus verdugos
Persiga en triste sueño
Del Prado Madrileño
Espectro aterrador.
Sangriente el agua beben
Sangriente el cielo miren
Y en sangre al cabo espiren
Por hierro vengador."

A chaste and appropriate cenotaph was raised, in the nave of the church alluded to, (privileged to celebrate the anniversary of these obsequies,) to the memory of the heroes. The grandees, the civil and military authorities, attended at the celebration of mass for the repose of their

souls; and the lofty and swelling peal of the organ was increased by the concord of various instruments of music.

Without the church, hundreds were collected on that terrace which abuts at the Casa de Correos; and the crowd, blending from its vicinity with the loiterers at the Puerta del Sol, soon received from that fount of knowledge and falsehood the truths and lies of the day. A gloom was seen gathering on the features of the Christinos, while a smile of triumph beamed upon the countenances of the opposing faction.

"Que barbaridad!" ejaculated an afficionado to the existing government. "They have murdered their prisoners."

"Asesinos!—they have shot our brave friend, Leopold O'Donnel."

"Quesada is defeated!" chuckled one of a different group.

"So much for the Majaderos!"

"Vaya," said a third; "old birds are not caught with chaff. Three weeks ago, he boasted that he would rout Zumalacarregui and the faction in the first engagement."

"The funds are wofully down."

"Hombre! *They* are the thermometer of events—the Christino weather-glass!"

"Then it is at freezing point."

We are necessarily led by the subject of this conversation to the very theatre of events, where the Christino general experienced such a signal defeat.

In consequence of the apathy of General Sarsfeld, commander-in-chief, at the proclamation of the young Queen, the Cabinet of Madrid advised and appointed his successors, Rodil and Quesada. The first, long known from his sanguinary disposition, was ably selected for murderous extermination;—the latter had ingratiated himself by a boast, that his first despatch from the seat of war should proclaim the "anni-

hilation of the faction." But he was destined to be lamentably mistaken; and the first serious overthrow experienced by the Queen's army, occurred when it was under his command.

The defile of the Amescoas will long be remembered in the annals of the civil war. Seated in the heart of Navarre, it wears the savage characteristics of that mountainous district, in all their rugged, yet imposing, beauty. Nature lent the guardians of this territory a bulwark of her own; and to another Thermopylæ added a Leonidas to defend the pass—the intrepid Zumalacarregui.

The rash Quesada, surprised, surrounded, and defeated, but narrowly effected his own escape. Colonel Conde de Labispal, (Leopold O'Donnel,) after performing prodigies of valour, was at length taken prisoner. His fate was distressing. On the eve of marriage with a young and beautiful heiress, surrounded by all that could brighten existence, he forfeited life

as nobly as he had conducted it. The alternative offered him by the adverse general — of death, or joining the cause of Don Carlos—drew from the captive a decisive and honourable reply. He was shot, with his brother-officers, made prisoners with him, by way of reprisal for certain Carlists put to death by the Christinos.

The murderous pursuit of the defeated troops of Quesada would have continued, but for the timely arrival of Jauregui el Pastor. And to this circumstance may be attributed the safety of a young and gallant officer belonging to the ill-fated troops of the Queen. He was wounded early in the engagement, and, weakened through loss of blood, would, but for this timely succour, have fallen under the exterminating knife of the opponents, who allowed no quarter. The troops of Zumalacarregui retreated before the reinforcement of Chapelgories and Peseteros, into the invulnerable fastnesses of the Amescoas,—

bearing with them the real trophies of a victory, yet leaving its empty name to the tardy allies of Quesada.

The battle-field was deserted,—the plunderers of the dead, scared by the pursuit of El Pastor's troops, remitted their harvest. Night for once spread a silent and hallowing veil over the wounded and the slain. Where the contest had most fiercely raged, some bodies were heaped as they had fallen. A young dragoon Christino officer, who had dropped from loss of blood, occasioned by a sabre wound, was buried beneath them. Freshened by the night and the keen air of the mountains, he recovered his presence of mind, disengaged himself from the gory heap around him, and faintly and with difficulty endeavoured to effect his escape. The well-known track which his buoyant and warlike division had followed but a few hours before, needed not the sun to guide his steps.

A toilsome way had been that of the wounded

soldier, when the bark of a distant watch-dog proclaimed his approach to the habitations of man. Following the direction of its sound, time and mental energy brought him, exhausted, to the nearest dwelling of a secluded hamlet in a defile of the mountains.

Mirth resounded from within, — the laugh of exultation struck dismay to the heart of the benighted and weary applicant for hospitality. Beside a huge fire were seated a peasant, his young and handsome wife, and the village curate.

"All — all sacrificed!" and the cura's face was lighted up with a triumphant but ungodly joy. "The glorious arms of our blessed Carlos shall ever be successful, for *his* is the cause of the Holy Church."

The peasant crossed himself with instinctive devotion.

"Thus perish every renegade!" continued

the cura, when a groan from without startled the trio.

The peasant rose from his seat; and, snatching the ever-ready escopeta, proceeded to open the door.

" Gente de paz " was the faint reply to the inquiry he made previous to raising the latch; and, on doing so, the tall and handsome form of a cavalry officer of the defeated troops of Christina was revealed by the light of the blazing hearth.

The simple mountaineer, though he beheld in the soldier an enemy to his favourite cause, yet felt, for the moment, his scruples overcome at the supplication of a wounded and defenceless fellow-countryman.

The reception of the young officer on the part of the priest was sullen and silently morose; and the peasant's wife, who first glanced at him in order to resolve on her own conduct towards

the stranger, veiled the natural expression of her features with a corresponding frown.

But hospitality was granted; the modest request of the traveller for a night's repose assented to; and he was suffered to rest his weary limbs in the loft which forms, in ordinary, part of a Spanish hut.

The mirth, which had first created forebodings in the breast of the wounded traveller, was hushed, inasmuch as measures of policy and revenge now occupied the mind of the priest. First, he determined to destroy the fugitive partisan of Isabel, so opportunely within his grasp;—and, next, to unfold this design to the artless peasant so as to obtain means of carrying it into execution. The young wife, it was reported in the village, was more frequent at the confessional than the measure of ordinary iniquities might require. Of her aid, we will, therefore, suppose the priest to feel secure; and now, when the officer had taken possession

of his humble couch, the cura began, in an under key, to recapitulate the enormities of the Queen's partisans, and vehemently to condemn all allegiance to her; whilst excommunication and curse were lavishly bestowed upon her adherents;—lastly, he held out that their extermination alone could be the means of obtaining for the nation celestial grace.

Meanwhile, the unfortunate soldier retired to rest. The flooring of the loft, upon which he lay, was rudely constructed; and, through the apertures between the planks, the light from below was visible. He essayed in vain to compose himself: the inhospitable scowl of the friar—the churlish reception of the mountaineer and his wife—failed not to make their full impression, and gloomy thoughts took possession of his mind. The acute pain of his wounds, too, fevered his imagination, and gave rise to frightful fancies. Occasionally closing his eyes, he started anew, as if the step of an

enemy approached. At length, the subdued voices of the inmates below reached his ear—a cold sweat bedewed every limb. He eagerly made to a friendly crevice, through which the light was admitted.

Their ghostly companion was reciting the benedicite to the peasant and his wife, the former of whom held the assassin's knife, and was receiving absolution for premeditated homicide. This task performed, the priest flung his black capa around him—cast a significant look towards the ceiling—and, with a last word of encouragement, "Corazon!" stole away.

With the presence of his holy counsellor vanished the resolves of the peasant, and the knife dropped from his hand. But another adviser was there; and the dying embers on the hearth, in their expiring light, revealed the fury of a Gorgon. The countryman quaked again—it was now from the dread of his better half. Once more he seized the knife.

Isidro Imnaz, Conde de Nuñez, for such was the intended victim, had watched their proceedings till the light from the hearth no longer aided his observation. He had marked the irascible features of the priest;—the hand which should be uplifted only to invoke a blessing upon the meek and lowly of his flock, was raised in an attitude of fearful menace. He overheard the whispered threat of the wife, spiriting her husband on to the deed of blood. At length, distinctly could he trace the slow, stealthy step of his murderer ascending the ladder. A propitious gleam of moonlight, admitted through the roof, enabled him to discern the opening in the floor of the grange, by which he had gained his dormitory, and at that moment the form of his intended assassin stood before him.

Self-preservation will suggest desperate means of rescue to the most timid; but the man of moral courage — of collected energies in the

trials of life—surveys danger with a steady eye; whilst, with the same comprehensive view, he embraces every chance of escape. Imminent was the peril of the unarmed guest. His thought and his deed were one. Springing upon the murderer ere he had gained firm footing from the ladder, Isidro's hand at once grasped his throat, and, by compression, effectually prevented his shrieks. Having, with the other, possessed himself of the knife, he hurled his faithless host headlong into the abyss. At the foot of the ladder stood the peasant's wife, also armed with a knife, to complete the work of murder should the hand of her husband vacillate in the deed; and, as he fell into the now dark space below, in her eagerness to fulfil the priest's decree, she sprang upon the supposed guest, and severed the head from the body!

Armed with the weapon which was destined to destroy himself, Imnaz rapidly sprang down the ladder,—found the door, and, emerging

from the abode of crime, sought a more secure resting place, leaving his hostess to discover, with return of day, in whose blood were imbrued the hands of an hospiticide.

CHAPTER XXII.

"And when, among the long dim aisles, the holy anthem dies,
They raise her face,—but she is gone, in music, to the skies!"

T. K. HERVEY.

"None but the god of assassins can receive the sacrilegious vows of a young nun: they are vows murderous to posterity; yet there are *thirty* nunneries in Madrid."

L'ANGLE'S SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY.

"Sgombra, o gentil, dall' ansia
Mente i terrestri ardori;
Leva all' Eterno un candido
Pensier d' offerta, e muori;
Nel suol che dee la tenera
Tua spoglia ricoprir,
Altre infelici dormono
Che il duol consunse; orbate
Spose dal brando, e vergini
Indarno fidanzate."

A. MANZONI.

The Bells of Madrid—Inauguration of a Nun—Unexpected Arrival—Mimic Death—Its Reality.

ONCE heard, ever remembered is the tumultuous din of the thousand church and convent bells of

Madrid, as they simultaneously summon the pious to matin and vesper service. It seems to swell and resound as if instinct with the haughty spirit of the priesthood of Spain. Not only are these same bells of gigantic dimensions, but formed of a peculiar metal, the production whereof has engrossed a great deal of the attention of the clergy. Among other relics brought from the Mexican palaces of Montezuma, there may be found in the Cabinet of Natural History at Madrid a shell of metal, of no great size, but so admirably calculated to protract sound, that the reverberation of a few successive strokes may be heard at an incredible distance; and tradition reports that the bellman of his Mexican Majesty generally lost the sense of hearing. How far this example of Indian ingenuity has been followed by the zeal of the Roman-catholic priesthood for the "cure of souls," we leave to the decision of those who, at complines, have been roused from the repose of the siesta by so

sudden and startling a hubbub, — not, we hope, to swear at the unwelcome and somewhat too sonorous summons, but instantly to close doors and windows, lest it should please Heaven to visit them with the affliction of the bellman of the mighty Montezuma.

Not such, however, was the solitary sound of the convent bell of the Commendadoras de Sant Jago, as its measured and funereal note swelled on the breeze, proclaiming the approaching ceremony of receiving into the cloisters one about to renounce the pomps and vanities of the world.

It was a beautiful morning of May; and busy as well as idle groups were, as usual, collected in the streets leading to the regularly-frequented Puerta del Sol as the finger of the clock of the church of Buen Suceso pointed to the hour of noon; but in that more remote and comparatively quiet part of the city, lying near the boundary wall at the gate of Fuencarral, it was

singular to notice the universal assemblage of gay equipages and elegant pedestrians.

At the extremity of the street of Fuencarral stands a building of considerable extent. It is apparently dilapidated; but that outward appearance of decay, which is common in Spain, owing to the exterior walls being mostly constructed of brick covered with mortar, is often deceptive; the interior of most of the temples of worship amply repays a visit from the amateur of the fine arts.

Thus, the porch of the convent of the Señoras Commendadoras de Sant Jago is outwardly mean; but no sooner is the heavily embroidered curtain suspended within pushed back, and admission gained, than the contrast of order and neatness strikes the beholder with surprise.

Rarely did those cloisters witness so multitudinous an assemblage as was on the present occasion congregated. The aisles were crowded to excess; whilst up the centre, leading

to the altar from the grated sanctuary of the nuns, two lines of priests ranged themselves. The choir was reserved for the privileged assistants and the relatives of that young creature who was this day to renounce the world. Intense interest was visible on every countenance. Many of the spectators were acquainted with the family of the youthful penitent. Some knew the beautiful girl herself; whilst others came only to witness the solemnity of a sacrifice perhaps more inspiring than any other portion of catholic worship.

A delightful harmony breathed from the fine voices in the choir, as they sang the "Veni Creator;" meanwhile, the drapery that curtained off the sanctuary of the nuns was drawn aside, and the iron gates were thrown open. Now burst forth, in sweet and melancholy peals, a hundred voices, filling the vaulted choir. The brides of Jesus joined in the solemn anthem, as, with slow and measured steps, they came forth,

led by the Superiora. None but the high-born of Castile were among these, and many of them were remarkable for beauty; but their downcast looks, not once raised from the ground, indicated that the gifts of nature and fortune were for ever laid prostrate at the altar of their Maker.

In the centre of the procession, and surrounded by the handmaid sisters of the order, appeared the novice. She was dressed in white; but there was a splendour and brilliancy displayed in her jewelled apparel which had resulted from the care of her presiding handmaiden, who would have ill understood the inflated spirit of monachism had she neglected the effect of contrast, and thereby failed to enhance to the bystanders the immensity of that sacrifice of youth and wealth.

But reckless of these adornments was the beautiful girl herself. By her, at least, no emotion of vanity was derived from this last exhibition of worldly pomp. Rather as a

culprit, weighed down with feelings of deep repentance for hopes unhallowed, yet too fondly cherished, did she lean on the arm of a sister Commendadora, and was borne along almost unconscious of the pre-eminent position she occupied in that ostentatious and imposing ceremony.

The procession continued to move forward; and the faltering steps of the devoted girl were led to the foot of the altar. The officiating priest then rose, and, advancing towards her, said—

"Daughter, name thy request!"

As dictated by her attendant, Juanita repeated—

"The mercy I have asked of my God is, to be received into this holy mansion for the rest of my days . . . . ."

"Thou hast resolved to renounce for ever thyself and the world?"

"I have!"

"May He who has inspired thee give thee strength to complete his work of grace!"

During the ceremony of the benediction of the cross, the mantle, and the veil, a solemn anthem was performed.

The "Adjutorium," the "Domine exaudi," the "Domine vobiscum," and other portions of the ritual, having been pronounced, the trembling maiden was led back to the grated sanctuary to be arrayed in the dress of the cloister, and then once more brought to the steps of the altar to receive the veil.

As she re-appeared in those shroud-like garments, the painful effect produced by the suddenness of the change was visible on every countenance. Her livid features seemed to indicate, in reality, a preparation for the funereal anthem, which now proclaimed a requiem for the dead; and many present, who had lately beheld that face beaming with smiles and youthful hope—many who ventured, with the growing

spirit of anti-monachism, to deprecate that sacrifice, and believed that, misled by priestly stratagem and artful interpretations of detached passages of scripture, her young heart had been imbued with a false and extravagant sense of devotion, for once erred in their judgment.

The priest now presented the lighted taper, and, holding the cross over the kneeling girl, pronounced, whilst a solemn stillness reigned around, the " Accendat in te, Dominus," &c.

Before the veil was thrown over her, the Superiora advanced, and, armed with the fatal scissors, grasped the flowing tresses (which had been purposely suffered to fall unconfined around her shoulders), and those shining locks fell in luxuriant beauty upon the marble pavement; while, as the priest pronounced the prayer (" Accipe hoc velum, O Dominus !") accompanying the act of throwing the veil, it was instantly spread, to hide the ravages committed on her beautiful head.

From a bier placed in the centre of the temple,

and surrounded by silver candelabras, holding large burning tapers, the black pall was removed, and the novice being supported to the foot, was gently lowered upon it by the nuns. Ghastly pale were her features; and the ebon fringes of her closed eyes reposed in painful contrast on her calm and death-like cheek. The breathing of the congregation was suspended. Death itself never appeared more real, more appalling, than in this mockery of its triumph, as the sepulchral cloth was spread over that delicate and motionless frame.

The silence of the grave prevailed around,—a thousand eyes were strained to watch Juanita's pallid face, and mark the faint smile vanish from her lips as the pall descended. Life never looked so death-like to the gaze of those who had, perhaps, before witnessed the human frame dressed for the tomb in the garb of a religious order, according to the custom of catholic Spain.

A small ivory image of the crucified Redeemer was in the novice's hands, now crossed upon

her bosom. How many were then, perhaps, in that assembled multitude, writhing under the tortures of memory—to whom this gloomy parade recalled, without restoring, buried hopes and withered loves; forms, torn from life's busy scene ere yet its joys were tasted, and moulder-ing in that sad attitude away.

Slowly arose, in mournful notes, the "De Profundis," as the beholders recovered from the touching spectacle. Their voices now joined in the solemn service for the dead, whilst stifled sobs testified the deep sympathy of many a spec-tator in that solemn rite.

Now boomed the great bell of the temple. The prayers of the faithful, and the voices of the choir, were heard, as the officiating priest swung on high the perfumed censer. With one im-pulse, a thousand knees bent at the sacred signal to receive the benediction of the hostie.

"Stay!—stay!" shouted a voice, during that moment of silence and prostration before the

altar. A thrill of surprise ran through the vast assembly.

"Stay!" . . . . repeated the voice, in the hoarse note of anguish, and Isidro, advancing with uncertain steps, fell before the bier that supported Juanita's form.

His forehead was wounded and bleeding,—his looks wild and haggard: gasping for breath, he extended his hand, and motioned to forbid the ceremony; whilst the officiating priest drew back, appalled at the ghastly appearance of the soldier.

Isidro, well nigh exhausted, now ejaculated, "She is mine!—mine!—my bride—my spouse! bear witness, God of heaven! . . . ."

The pall that was stretched on the body of Juanita was slightly agitated, as by a faint effort to remove its heavy clinging folds. Again all was motionless: not a sound, not a sigh, penetrated its dark draperies.

"She is mine! . . . . speak, my betrothed!

let thine own lips confirm the truth! Mercy, fathers!—mercy! . . . ."

"Away with him!—he is mad!" exclaimed the priest, recovering his self-possession.

Omnipotent in the temple is the pastor. A hundred ready hands were stretched forth to seize the sacrilegious intruder.

Some of the veiled sisters now approached the bier to remove the pall. That moment of interest to all freed Isidro from immediate violence, whilst his eyes were strained to look again upon the form he loved.

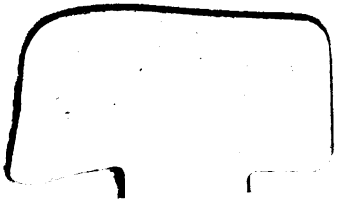
Slowly the funereal cloth was folded back—the veil yet hid Juanita's face; but, as the pall was farther removed, the ivory cross appeared, clenched in her hand with convulsive force.

"Bride of the heavenly Redeemer, arise!" solemnly pronounced the priest.

Unheeded was that voice. Motionless as the bier itself was the form extended on it. All eyes were fixed upon that stiffened frame. Isidro,

who felt the grasp that withheld him relax, slid from the galling restraint with a dread presentiment. His trembling hand snatched the gauze from the face of Juanita—with a cry of frantic despair he fell upon the corpse of his beloved—her spirit had fled for ever.

Shocked at this fatal termination of the ceremony, the distressed congregation withdrew in much confusion. The body of the maiden was again covered with the sepulchral pall, and removed; whilst the temple underwent purification from the sacrilege of interrupted rites, ere the service for the dead could be repeated, with more real occasion, over the same mortal remains.

END OF VOL. II.

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